

Tuesday December 24 1996

Table of exchange rates for various countries including Abu Dhabi, Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Kuwait, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, USA.

The Guardian

Printed in London, Manchester, Frankfurt and Roubaix

INTERNATIONAL
NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR
46,744

Inside: a special seasonal G2 with quizzes, prize crossword, Christmas TV & radio

Santa Claus on the cob



It's A Wonderful Life: Feel good or film noir?



G2 with European

Fiancée facing murder charge

Tracey Andrews, 27, of Alvechurch, Hereford and Worcester, had been held at Eastwood Park women's prison, near Gloucester, over the weekend. Her bail conditions stipulate that she return to her parents' home, less than 1 1/2 miles from the murder scene, and not contact any witnesses. Andrews — accused of murdering Mr Harvey, aged 25, on December 1 — claims he was killed by the passenger of an F-registered Ford Sierra car who hurled racial insults at him. Mr Harvey was stabbed nearly 40 times in a country lane, near the couple's home in Alvechurch. Andrews told a press conference that a fat man with staring eyes had stabbed her boyfriend to death. However, at a court hearing last Friday, the prosecution said forensic evidence connected her to the stabbing: three or four of her hairs had been found in Mr Harvey's flat and her jersey was spattered with his blood. Speaking after the bail application, her solicitor, Tim Robinson, said: "She is grateful to members of the press for the response to the appeal which has been made. "Already one very significant witness has come forward."



Tracey Andrews leaving Eastwood Park prison yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: DARREN FLETCHER

Brown seeks to remove breaks for high earners

Labour's 'fair tax' for rich

Alex Brummer
Financial Editor
THE Labour Party is drafting a radical restructuring of the tax system in an effort to introduce a greater degree of fairness into personal taxation. The plan is designed to land more revenue and assist a Labour chancellor to balance the nation's books without scaring the well-off. The proposals, which the shadow chancellor, Gordon Brown, intends to unveil in February, will focus on removing some of the hidden tax breaks — worth billions of pounds — enjoyed by Britain's highest earners. These measures are seen as a potential alternative to one idea — reported at the weekend to have been stamped on by Tony Blair — for a 50p in the pound income tax on those people earning more than £100,000 per year. The Labour leadership insists that no decisions on the top rate of tax have been taken. Both Mr Blair and the shadow chancellor are wary about Labour being branded a high tax party. Instead, they hope to shift the debate to fairness and the ability of the better-off to ease their tax burden by diverting money into pensions schemes. Higher income earners are also able to shelter tax from the exchequer by exploiting capital gains tax loopholes and through use of rollover relief, which allows entrepreneurs to realise gains and reinvest them without penalties. Labour had initially intended to unveil its tax plans in January as a means of wresting the political initiative from the Tories in the wake of the November bud-



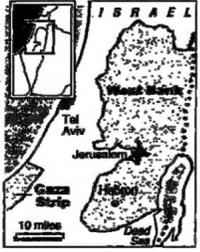
The Conservatives began the process under Chancellor Nigel Lawson when tax relief on pensions contributions was capped at £82,000. However, a Labour chancellor could potentially raise a huge amount of funds by ratcheting down the tax relief on pensions from 40 per cent — for upper band taxpayers earning £26,100 or more per year — and bringing it down towards the basic rate of tax. Such a move could be initially focused on the 120,000 people in Britain earning more than £100,000 a year, and gradually lowered. This would leave the principle of tax relief for pension in place, but would prevent the better-off sheltering a larger proportion of their income for retirement. As part of its effort to demonstrate that it favours a fairer tax system, Mr Brown is determined to remove VAT on fuel which currently stands at 7.5 per cent. However, to do this and keep the level of government borrowing from rising will mean finding new sources of income. The proposed one-off utility tax on electricity and water companies has already been committed to education and training programmes. So Labour has been searching for new targets. One possible area is tightening up on income qualifying for capital gains tax, which yields £1.2 billion a year. At present various reliefs mean the Inland Revenue loses a large amount of income. Notebook, page 11

Peace breakthrough nears in Hebron

US envoy helps draw two sides together to hammer out Israeli withdrawal deal. Jessica Berry and Ian Black report

ISRAEL and the Palestinians appeared last night to have clinched a breakthrough agreement on an Israeli pullback from the West Bank town of Hebron, breathing new life into the Middle East peace process on the eve of a Christmas deadline set by the American president, Bill Clinton. After weeks of warnings of renewed, bloody conflict in the Holy Land, and days of frantic negotiations, a senior Palestinian official said the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and the Palestinian president, Yasser Arafat, would meet today. The two were expected to sign the long-delayed deal. Instrumental to the apparent breakthrough was Mr Clinton's special envoy, Dennis Ross, who was meeting Mr Arafat in Gaza last night

with a process whose momentum stalled under the previous Labour government of the late Yitzhak Rabin and has become dangerously deadlocked under Mr Netanyahu. Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation have accused each other of foot-dragging in more than three months of talks on the city, 80 per cent of which was due to have been handed over to Mr Arafat's Palestinian Authority months ago. The delay became the focus for fears that Mr Netanyahu had conceded as much to the Palestinians as he was going to. He has vowed to step up Jewish settlement. PLO officials said agreement was emerging because the Israelis had dropped their insistence on having the right to pursue Palestinian suspects into PLO-held areas. But the real key to implementation seemed to be readiness by both sides to give written guarantees that they will carry out the remaining elements of peace accords already signed. Mr Ross was said to be putting together a package link-



ing a Hebron pullback to an Israeli timetable for three further troop withdrawals from rural areas of the West Bank. These were originally to have begun in September and be completed within a year. By the end of the third pullback, Israeli forces would be out of all areas of the West Bank except "Greater" Jerusalem, Jewish settlements and specified military locations. That would give Mr Arafat control of 70 per cent of the West Bank compared

with the current 4 per cent. The Palestinians, in turn, would give dates for carrying out their side of the peace accords. Mr Netanyahu has insisted on a timetable for the completion of a new PLO charter that removes phrases about Israel's destruction; the disarming of Islamic militants; the extradition of Palestinians suspected of attacking Israelis; and the closure of Palestinian Authority offices in Jerusalem. Mr Netanyahu's top policy adviser, David Bar-Ilan, said the prime minister was ready to pledge in writing that he will implement the peace agreements signed by Mr Rabin. "We have said that we want reciprocity. We are perfectly willing to commit in writing what we have said often enough, that we are committed to the Oslo process provided that the other side will discharge its obligations under the agreement," he said. In Hebron itself, where 500 extremist Jewish settlers live surrounded by 130,000 Palestinians, an Israeli truck took equipment from the military

governor's office but officials declined to say whether final preparations for a troop withdrawal were under way. News of a possible breakthrough was greeted with angry derision by settlers. Their spokesman, Noam Aron, said: "This is the end of the Jewish community in Hebron." Evacuating Hebron would be an important moment for Mr Netanyahu. It would be the first time he has dared to do what Mr Rabin died for: surrender areas occupied since 1967 to Arab rule. In the city yesterday Israeli troops were stoned by Palestinians, two of whom were arrested. The soldiers enforced a partial curfew on an area around Jewish enclaves Beit Hadassah and Beit Romano. Roads leading to the Jewish homes were also blocked. Israel announced yesterday that land in the Golan Heights will soon be sold for the construction of 96 settlers' homes — a move likely to further strain relations with Syria, which lost the Heights in 1967. It is demanding their return as part of a peace deal.

Advertisement for Bass beer featuring a Christmas tree and a turkey. Text includes: "Turkey, broken fairy lights, relatives, turkey, chitty chitty, bang bang, relatives." and "Yo-ho-ho." The Bass logo and "BEST SELLING PREMIUM CASK ALE SINCE 1777" are also present.

Inside section with sub-sections: Britain, World News, Finance, Sport. Includes a small crossword puzzle and a weather forecast.

Comment and Letters 8; Obituaries 10; Crossword 15; Weather 16; TV and Radio 15-16. Includes a barcode and the number 770261 307323.

'The rebels might have methods we disagree with but they are part of Peru'

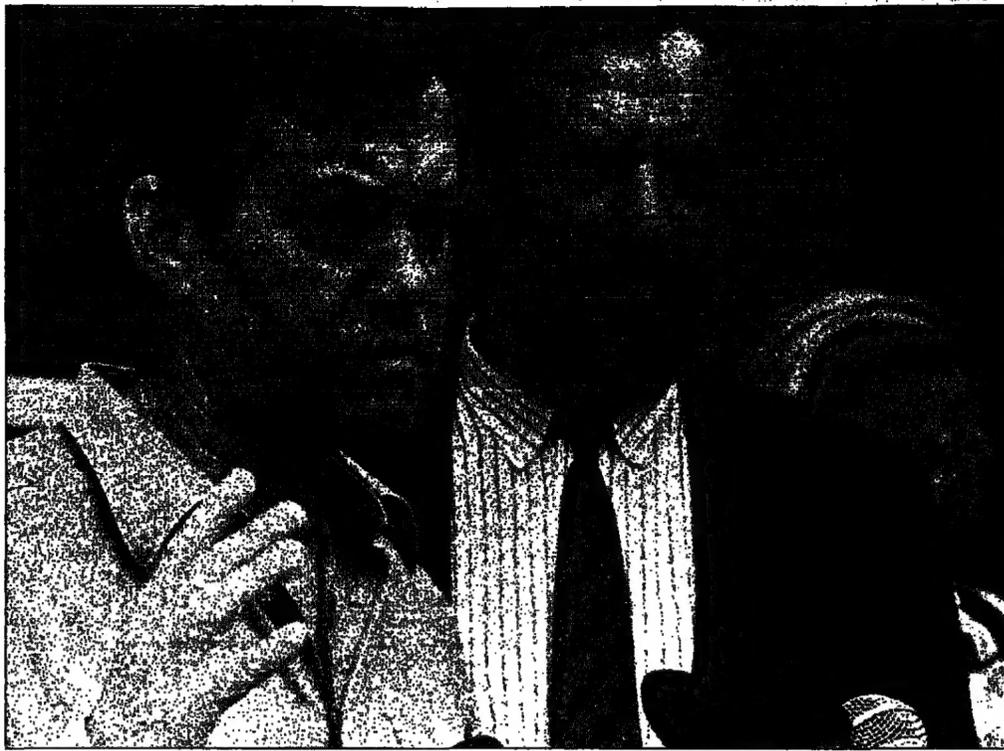
Jane Diaz-Limaco on the Lima releases

AN HOUR after being freed with 224 other hostages by Peruvian guerrillas, Briton Roger Church celebrated yesterday with a glass of cold beer at home with his wife, Catherine, and his two sons.

Looking fresh despite everything, a smiling Mr Church said: "This has been a difficult few days and I'm just pleased to be out and reunited with my family. My thoughts are still with those left inside."

Last night 140 people remained captive as the siege of the Japanese ambassador's residence in Lima by Tupac Amaru guerrillas entered its seventh day. They included the Peruvian foreign minister, Francisco Tudela, the former prime minister, Dante Cordova, several high-ranking police and military officers, and diplomats.

"The treatment during my time was that there was no threat... There was a threat in that they were using arms but at no time was anybody mistreated as far as I'm aware," said Mr Church. He added that he was held with other diplomats on the second



The freed British diplomat Roger Church (left), watched by London's ambassador, John Homan, talks to reporters in Lima. PHOTOGRAPH: BLAKE SELL

floor and was not allowed to move about or go downstairs by about 18 mostly young and heavily armed rebels.

The former Peruvian economy minister, Gustavo Saberbein, was among the 225 people released in what the rebels called a Christmas goodwill gesture.

Conditions were appalling, Mr Saberbein said. The hostages were split among 10 to 12 rooms and he was confined to a room measuring four metres by six with 38 other people, including a newspaper editor, Manuel Romero, and the former employment minister, Sandro Fuentes.

The rebels had lodged a table on its side against the window as a shield. "At night we were practically lying on our backs, head to feet," Mr Saberbein said.

A great problem, he added, was that of sanitation, with only six bathrooms at most among about 400 people. Portable lavatories brought in by the Red Cross only partly eased the situation.

The hostages organised themselves into teams to clean and to distribute food and medicine, and delegates

for each room were elected.

Most of the time, Mr Saberbein said, was spent in political debate. "We spent hours and hours talking about politics and the economy either with the subversives or among ourselves."

He said almost all the hostages felt extreme rage at the government for cutting off the water supply to the residence and disappointment at hearing President Alberto Fujimori's hard-line speech.

Mr Saberbein said that after hours of talking to the rebels: "There was a total change in people's attitude... The rebels might have methods we disagree with but in the end they are part of Peru."

Among those most frustrated by the situation, he said, was the foreign minister, Mr Tudela, who had tried to telephone two secret numbers for the government palace. When the minister identified himself, the person at

the other end repeatedly hung up, said Mr Saberbein.

"I think the government officials felt abandoned by the government."

Other freed hostages said that each guerrilla patrolled the residence with a belt of grenades or explosives, presumably ready to blow up themselves and their captives if necessary.

Uniformed rebels, some with shaved heads, strode through the corridors carrying automatic weapons, said Estuardo Marron, a professor at Lima's Pacific University.

The hostages talked for hours with the guerrilla leader, Nestor Cerpa, only realising who he was after a television broadcast showed his photo.

While the crisis for those inside may have been eased physically by the reduction of the number of hostages, the psychological pressure has increased.

"The rebels said they would 'review' the situation of the Asian and Latin American diplomats still held but would refuse to hand over anyone connected with government policy until Mr Fujimori released around 400 jailed Tupac Amaru members.

At the residence yesterday Red Cross officials continued to shuttle water, blankets, medicine and food into the building in the only apparent sign of contact.

A merry night with girls in pearls

TV review

Nancy Banks-Smith

THE merriest moment of the night was Tanya Buchanan, twirling her long blonde hair into a top-knot, telling the Country Life photographer, "You've got a cobweb on your crotch."

He had, too. And so have more of us than care to admit it.

Tanya was what any other magazine would call a pin-up. Country Life call their famous frontispiece girls in pearls. Like the mansions at the back of Country Life, the girls at the front are glossy, beautiful and you know you can't afford them. So stop dribbling.

Technically celebrating the magazine's centenary, An Everyday Story of Country Life (BBC 2) was a curious Christmas programme. You pick up the magazine, thumb and pulled... A woman plums as the news... Michael Heseltine... Country Life in the... according to Mrs Heseltine... "It always looks a bit dumpy and crumpled."

Tony Blair proved oddly elusive, though Caroline Fetherstonhaugh temptingly demonstrated a catlike shaped like the door of No 10 Downing Street.

Melanie Cable-Alexander (the names alone are worth the cover price) was interviewed by Willie Forbes, a Scottish taxidermist. "His accent is delicious but not that easy to comprehend."

Willie surveyed a stuffed buffalo with pride and said all too clearly, "A charging buffalo is considered one of the most powerful laxatives in the world."

Back in the gutter, Brookside (Channel 4) is on fire. A pair of jeans tumbles up the stairs of Casa Bevron and torches the place. Baby Kylie is flung from an upstairs window. Ron, built for staying power rather than speed, staggers out with Jackie Corkhill in his arms.

Everyone assumes that Jimmy Corkhill, the resident scally, did it. Jimmy, adopting an unaccustomed air of injured innocence, claims, very naively, that he fell asleep watching telly. His stubble has reached unprecedented proportions before it turns out that Bev, a woman scorned, did it.

By the way, Casa Corkhill, known variously as No. 10 Brookside Close or 'The Cause of Orrors', is currently on the market for a tempting £25,000. What do you reckon? — bearing in mind that Our Little Jimmy was ordered there and child molester Trevor Jordache was found buried under the patio and I haven't seen the dog lately.

Emmerdale (Yorkshire TV) caught fire a day later. The square, his wife and his wife's lover, Glover, were having their customary fight on the forecourt when they noticed that the nursery was on fire. Glover the lover rescued his son before he was felled by a flaming curtain rod.

And joined Jackie Corkhill in Casualty.

Meanwhile, Simon Callow, wreathed in distracting whiskers, is giving An Audience with Charles Dickens (BBC 2) plenty of welly. Last night, The Murder of Nancy. I don't know why. That's a story that never appealed to me.

Howard fails crime and punishment targets

'Hi-De-Hi' holiday camp to become a prison

ALAN TRAVIS Home Affairs Editor

A FORMER Pontin's holiday camp is to be made into an emergency prison as a wave of "not-in-my-back-yard" protests has laid waste to the Government's plans for a crash building programme to meet rising inmate numbers.

Doncaster council yesterday blocked plans for the prison service to turn a former RAF base into a temporary camp holding 1,000 inmates, arguing that the South Yorkshire town is already Britain's jail capital with four new prisons in recent years.

A successful local protest movement, Doncaster Against More Prisons, yesterday handed in an 8,000-signature petition against the new jail.

The same "Nimby" backlash against new prisons has also stalled for more than four years the Government's plans to open a £100 million national network of child jails, or secure training centres, to lock up persistent juvenile offenders.

In a move which will confound even satirists, the Home Secretary, Michael Howard, is to house up to 700 inmates in converted "Hi-De-Hi style" chalets at the Morcambay holiday camp at Heysham, a holiday village on the Lancashire coast.

The 62-acre site, once a second world war internment camp, closed two years ago after many years service as a holiday centre. The chalets will be converted for use as a Category C low security closed prison with an austere environment, said prison chiefs yesterday.

Last night the Director-General of the Prison Service, Richard Tilt, said he was planning his hopes on the holiday camp and a floating prison ship to be moored in Portland Harbour, near Weymouth, Dorset, to avert a crisis in February. Both, however, need planning permission.

The prison population reached a record 53,500 last week and is expected to surge again after Christmas. The only alternative to new accommodation is the use of expensive police



The former Pontin's camp at Heysham

cells — an option already censured by MPs.

Mr Tilt yesterday admitted that "Nimbyism" was a big problem for the Prison Service. Doncaster's RAF Finningley has been blocked, and a planned prison at Telford, Shropshire, lost, because of local objections. Other new jails at Walton, Liverpool, and Salford, Greater Manchester, have been delayed because of local protests.

"We are getting pushed into more and more remote sites which are not entirely satisfactory and make maintaining family links for prisoners much harder," Mr Tilt said.

The problem has been sharpest for Home Office planners trying to set up a

Police numbers drop despite Tory pledge

ALAN TRAVIS

THE number of police officers in England and Wales has fallen by nearly 1,000 since the last general election, ministers have admitted, despite John Major's promises to put more on the beat.

The admission slipped out in parliamentary answers on the last day before the Christmas recess.

Mr Major and Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, have boasted about extra funding for the police and the disclosure will hit the Government's claim to be the party of law and order in the run-up to next year's general election.

The 1992 Conservative manifesto promised to increase police strength by 1,000 officers. It was followed by the Prime Minister's pledge at the 1992 Tory conference to boost numbers by a further 5,000 over three years.

But new Home Office figures show that while there were 125,043 police officers employed in October 1992, the strength has fallen by 993 to 125,050 now.

Chief constables have claimed Mr Howard has cut

equipment such as CS sprays and stab-proof vests, and on new technology such as the creation of a national DNA database.

The Home Office figures show that the Metropolitan Police has 785 fewer officers than in 1992. Merseyside has lost 416, South Wales 269, Avon and Somerset 64, and Devon and Cornwall 42. Twenty-four of the 43 forces in England and Wales have fewer police than they did after the last election. One force, Lancashire, has exactly the same number.

Of the remaining 18 forces, which have increased their numbers since 1992, for 10 the rise is by fewer than 70. The largest rises have been in the West Midlands — up 268 — and in Gwent — up 233.

Mr Howard has boasted that he has made £20 million available this year which was supposed to pay for an extra 1,000 officers.

The Liberal Democrat home affairs spokesman, Alex Carlile, who put down the Commons questions, said: "The Tories have broken their 1992 manifesto commitment on police numbers. Now they look set to break another. We cannot believe them when it comes to bubbles on the beat."

"Instead of the promised 6,000 new officers, we have lost nearly 1,000. At a time of rising crime this is not good enough."

— Home Office, December 1996

'We have found the resources to put over the next three years, not 500, but an extra 5,000 officers on the beat.'

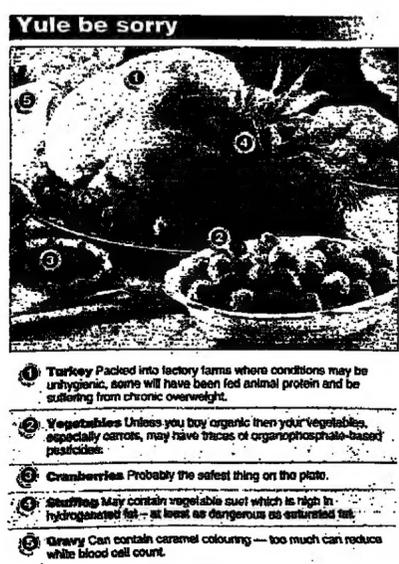
— John Major, October 1995

'We are well on track to delivering the first 1,000 officers promised last year'

— Michael Howard, October 1996

Police numbers fell by 993 between 1992 and 1996.

Turkey and trimmings on our dinner plates come stuffed with unpalatable chemicals



Yule be sorry

ALX BELLOS

MILLIONS of Britons will sit down tomorrow for a Christmas feast in turkey with cranberry sauce and roast vegetables.

Though considered traditional fare, the meal is a Victorian invention, and its main ingredients came originally from north America.

To satisfy the huge demand for this one-off meal, producers are using increasingly intensive methods of production. Turkeys are reared in factory farms, vegetable are grown as hybrids, and soon many products will include genetically engineered crops.

"The Christmas meal is a good illustration of the globalisation process. In a very short space of time what would keep millions fed is given to the overfed," says Tim Lang, professor of food policy at Thames Valley University.

"We need to be aware that this enormous sucking sound of the vacuum cleaner of our collective stomachs has huge implications around the world."

Turkeys — originally from America — can fly in the wild at speeds of up to 50 miles an hour. Most of the birds eaten

tomorrow will have been grown in a space insufficient for them to stretch their wings fully.

Even though not carnivores, their feed can contain meat, possibly poultry. They are bred to gain weight very rapidly and as a result many have impaired hips and legs.

To minimise aggression between birds, 10 per cent of chicks are debeaked — sliced off with a red hot blade or clippers — according to the British Turkey Information Service.

Only 2 to 4 per cent of the 12 million turkeys sold this Christmas will have been raised free range.

Tim O'Brien, head of research at Compassion in World Farming, said: "It is surely commonsense that animals raised for food should be kept in reasonably hygienic conditions. Farm animal welfare and human health are inextricably linked."

Unless you buy organic, all the Christmas fruit and vegetables you eat will have been sprayed with pesticide. Cranberry farming probably uses the least.

The cranberry is one of only three fruits native to north America (the other two are blueberries and Concord grapes), and it is most likely

Can Lloyds Bank customers use TSB cash machines?

Yes.

That's use of an extra 1,890 cash machines free of charge. So now you are even closer to your money.

THE THOROUGHbred BANK.

John 10/12/96

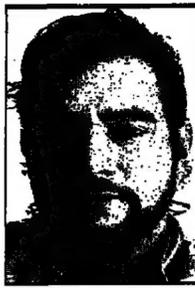
Succeeding with Shakespeare

Firms' managers urged to the breach



Rallying the troops... Kenneth Branagh in the title role in the recent film production of Henry V

New courses combining management theory with workshops on Henry V offer businessmen a perfect role model. Donald MacLeod reports



Richard Olivier: organising workshops at Globe Theatre

MANAGERS seeking to launch takeover battles, solve internal company wrangles or spur their marketing department to greater efforts are being encouraged to study the leadership qualities of Shakespeare's Henry V.

Presumably, references to "rackets" and "companies unletter'd, rude and shallow" will be toned down. "Henry V poses many of the dilemmas faced by the modern leader," say the organisers.

Enter marketing manager, stage right...

Henry V, Act III, scene 1. France before Harfleur. Once more unto the breach dear friends, once more; Or close the wall up with our English dead;

As fearfully as doth a galled rock. O'erhang and jutty his confounded base, Swill'd with the wild and wasteful ocean.

Be copy now to men of grooves; bleed. And teach them how to war. And you, good yeomen. Whose limbs were made in England, show us here the mettle of your pasture;

Major considers mass showdown with party Eurosceptics

Public conference would seek to expose critics as minority

Michael White Political Editor

JOHN Major and his closest allies are considering staging a public showdown with their Eurosceptic critics in the Tory ranks by calling a conference of MPs, ministers, candidates and local party chairmen to thrash out their differences in the new year.

ahead with his latest plan for ending the Tory civil war, he would summon his troops to a one-day conference at the Queen Elizabeth II conference centre — across the road from the Palace of Westminster — in the week of January 13 when Parliament returns.

constituency chairmen, who wield considerable influence at local level. "John Major would just sit there on a stool and let the sceptics have a go at him. The idea would be to show they were a tiny minority," one senior MP said yesterday.

see" policy towards the single currency and its "partnership of nations" alternative to political integration. But despite repeated efforts since to close down the issue before polling day, Mr Major faces a hard core of critics, egged on by the rightwing Tory press, who believe that a flag-waving, nationalist election campaign is the only way to save the Government.

gloom was exposed on GMTV on Sunday when he described the controversy as one which "we haven't had in 150 years of politics" — a reference to the Corn Laws controversy of 1846 which split the Tory party over agricultural protectionism and kept it out of power for a generation.

being deployed by other would-be leadership contenders on the Tory right even as they canvass for support. In any case, loyalists, still a majority in the Cabinet, believe that even if Mr Major conceded that Britain would not join a single currency in the 1997-2002 Parliament, or even in the "first wave" of entry in 1999, it would not satisfy their party opponents.

special significance because of reports that at least 140 MPs and candidates — "far more than that", Eurosceptics claim — are preparing to declare their opposition to a single currency in their personal election manifestos.

On offer

Hot food; clothes; GP, dentistry and chiropody; hairdressing; housing and accommodation advice; arts, crafts, music and entertainment; (in London only) mobile food, medical and dog care.



THERE ARE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS. (WE'RE ONLY CLOSED ON ONE.)

24 hours a day... 7 days a week... Now you can pick up the phone and get pensions information or advice and even set up a plan, quickly and without fuss.

0345 6789 10 SCOTTISH WIDOWS

For your protection, your calls to Scottish Widows may be recorded. Information or advice will only be provided on Scottish Widows products, issued by Scottish Widows Fund & Life Assurance Society, a mutual company, regulated by the Personal Investment Authority.



Chris Sloan, the local community policeman on the Downham Estate: 'It is much quieter now'

PHOTOGRAPH BY SEAN SMITH

Dusk curfew tames young gangs

Tough policing has impact, reports Peter Hetherington

REGULAR attacks with flour, eggs, bottles and bricks, were bad enough. But when shopkeepers complained of gangs ransacking their premises, and old people were chased and threatened with knives in the afternoon, police decided that drastic action was needed on the Downham Estate in Catford, south London.

Case 1
Boy, 15. Remanded on August 12 for harassment, criminal damage and threatening a man. Bail conditions included 9pm-7am curfew. Arrested following month for breach of bail. Found guilty, ordered to pay £50, and given community service and supervision order.

Case 2
Boy, 13. Arrested on June 25, charged with £1,500 criminal damage and possession of knife. Given 7pm-7am curfew and geographical "exclusion order". Found guilty on October 31. Ordered to pay £10 compensation and given two-year supervision order.

team of youngsters more organised than others, causing out-and-out mayhem with anti-social behaviour and seriously affecting the residents' quality of life.

first area in the country to experiment with a co-ordinated curfew drive as part of tough bail conditions. As such, it is a role model for even tougher legislation being planned by Labour to extend curfews beyond bail.

Community Safety Orders, if residents show there is a demand. And Catford is the first step. "Contrary to what some of my colleagues say, it is a very socialist thing to do," insists the Lewisham East MP, Bridget Prentice, who was petitioned by people on the Downham Estate. Children from the age of eight had attacked residents. "Old people were chased and threatened with knives and chains in the afternoon, gardens uprooted, and wheelie bins set on fire — and shopkeepers had to contend with gangs intimidating customers, ransacking and stealing."

complaints during the last summer holidays when bus services were withdrawn after a spate of attacks. Police responded by patrolling in unmarked cars, using video cameras and what Supt Doak describes as a variety of other "sophisticated intelligence-gathering measures" to gain evidence against ring-leaders. "Youngsters were soon arrested. But rather than send them to informal juvenile panels, officers opted for youth courts and insisted that offenders should be subject to dusk-to-dawn curfews as a condition of bail. "We had to convince the Crown Prosecution Service it was a good idea. There was a reluctance because some of the charges appeared very minor. We were not bending the law —

we were applying it to the letter." Some locals believe they might now be experiencing the calm before another storm — for the bail curfew is only operational from arrest to final court appearance, which can be several months. But the local community policeman, PC Chris Sloan, believes the curfew drive sends out a powerful message. "Shopkeepers are telling me it is much quieter now, but then the 14 to 15-year-olds are getting more mobile and will move on. I just hope no one follows them."

The local ironmonger still sleeps uneasily. "They might have dealt with the trouble-makers, but I fear their apprentices will be back next summer."

Unionists deny Goldsmith deal

Trimble insists parties' alliance limited to European parliament

THE Ulster Unionist leader, David Trimble, yesterday insisted his party's support for Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party in the European Parliament had no bearing on business at Westminster.

We will continue to vote in the same way as we do and have done in the House of Commons. We are not going to behave in a capricious or irresponsible manner in terms of voting... We will consider each matter very carefully in terms of its implications and we will be voting as Ulster Unionists.

fell to 17 after a French MEP, Anne Christine Poisson, defected. To qualify for group status in the parliament — and consequently extra funding for facilities and assistants — a party needs 18 members if support is drawn from three states.

been trawling around desperately for months, doing their utmost to poach, beg or borrow anyone they could get. It has been laughable to watch. "They even had the brass neck to offer me a deal under which they would support us on social and environmental legislation. In return they wanted our support for them moving towards the centre of the chamber and away from the fascists. I sent them packing."

Fears grow for safety of 'streetwise' girl missing five days

FEARS grew yesterday for the safety of a girl aged nine — described by police as streetwise — who has been missing from her home in Chester for five days.

following night when she realised that Kayleigh had not gone to stay at her aunt's. Kayleigh, who frequently played truant from school, and was known to talk to vagrants in the city centre, was nicknamed "Oddbod" and "Oddie".

vantage of vulnerable young girls. I am personally hopeful that we are going to find her, but as time goes on my concern is increasing.

had seen Kayleigh on a bus on Friday afternoon; she had said she was going into Chester to "hang around the town centre".

EU move to lift fur ban challenged

Paul Brown Environment Correspondent

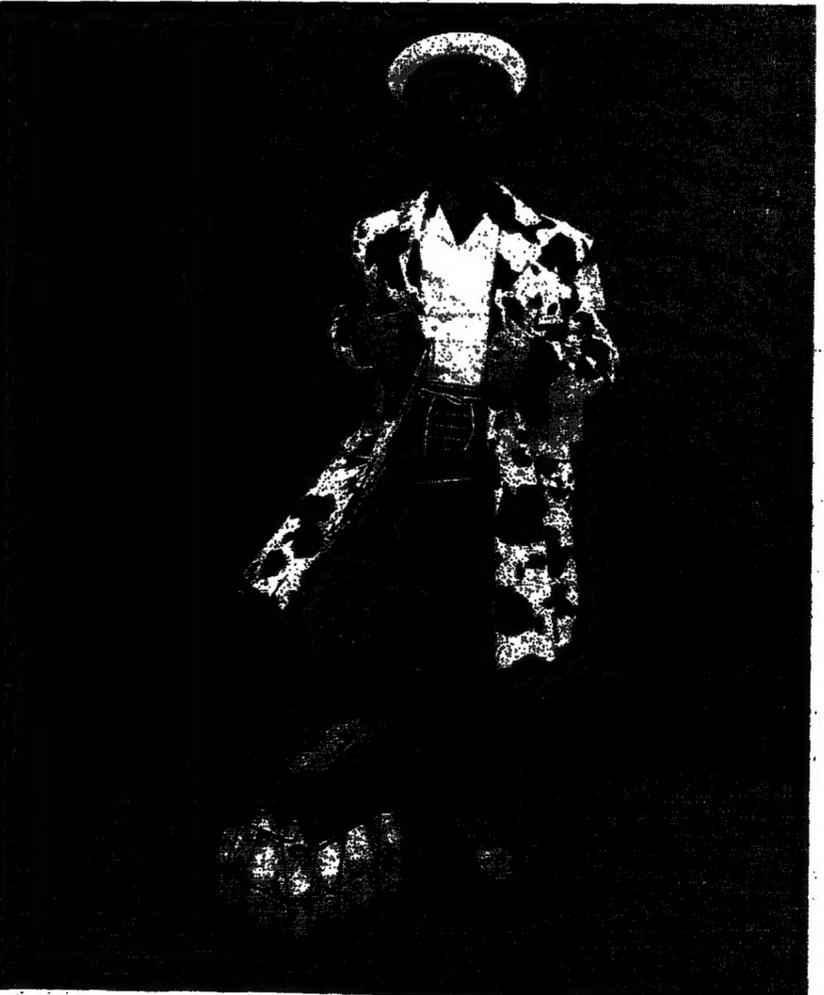
A JOINT attack has been launched by John Gummer, the Environment Secretary, and Ken Collins, a senior Labour MEP, against attempts by the European Commission to lift a ban on the fur trade with north America and Russia. Leon Brittan, the European Union trade commissioner, has decided that a ban on leghold traps should be lifted because of a threat of trade sanctions from the United States. This goes against a decision by environment ministers earlier this month. They decided to ignore the threat and reinforce the ban which in effect means fur cannot be imported from countries which use these devices.

traps underwater drown, because they cannot reach the surface to breathe. The EU was due to ban the import of furs from the countries still using the traps from January 1, but the US said this was a breach of the rules on free trade, and threatened sanctions if Europe did not relent. Three weeks ago the 15 EU environment ministers decided the ban should stand. They told the commission to reopen negotiations with the three countries concerned and that, if it failed to reach a compromise on new rules on cruelty, they would impose the ban from March 31. The Environment Commissioner in Brussels, Ritt Bjerregaard, attempted to carry out the instructions but was overruled by Sir Leon, who was backed by other commission members. He decided protecting Europe's free trade with the US was more important than a ban on leghold traps. Mr Gummer said in his letter to the commission and fellow ministers: "I find it difficult to understand how the commission can justify acting in a way which is clearly not in accordance with the views expressed by the December council meeting."

Ten jailed for ringside riot

TEN men were jailed yesterday for a riot which blackened the names of British boxing. The men all admitted charges of violent disorder at the world championship bout between Britain's Nigel Benn and Spain's Juan Gomez at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, in September 1994, which was televised worldwide.

City and Manchester City football fans clashed. Mark Austin, 22, Peter Perryman, 31, Robert Paddock, 27 and Thomas Gaynor, 35, all from Birmingham, Philip Waring, 24, of Olton, West Midlands, Gary Williams, 34, of Marston Green and Terry Jones, 24, of Northfield were jailed for three months. Thomas Williams, 41, Malcolm Reddican, 25, and Paul Redshaw, 38, all from Manchester, were jailed for six months.



The Selfridges Sale starts early. LONDON'S FIRST BIG SALE. STARTS FRIDAY 27th DECEMBER 9am.

So you're not Santa, Father?
"Santa! That ludicrous, emasculated, overlaid powder-puff confection of Catholic mumbo-jumbo, Protestant puritanism and Western capitalism? Ho! I piss, belch and fart on Santa!"
Father Christmas on the psychiatrist's couch

G2 cover story

صوت الامم المتحدة

ove to
r ban
enged

Village pays price for summer hatred

David Sharrock visits predominantly Catholic Pomeroy, where there will be no Protestant children's carol walks and the few Protestant traders are being forced out by a nationalist boycott

THE reedy, untuned voices of children singing Christmas carols is a tradition of the season and enough to move the hardest heart, but in a village in the mid-Ulster county of Tyrone will tonight remain silent for the first time in many years.

Pupils from the Pomeroy First Presbyterian Church will not be following the local tradition of walking the predominantly Catholic village on Christmas Eve and singing in aid of charity. Fear of attack is at the back of the minds of many parents, but the cancellation is the most telling reminder that Northern Ireland has slipped from

hope into a despair and division the depth of which has not been felt for decades.

Two pre-Christmas attacks — the first by the IRA in a children's hospital, the second by loyalists against a leading republican — tell their own story about this season of goodwill but buried deeper below the surface is a more disturbing picture of two communities thrust ever further apart.

This Christmas in Pomeroy, Ulster's highest and therefore coldest village, the tradition of children's carol singing has already died. The case of the hostility is tied up in the events of last summer — the worst marching season since the early 1970s —

and the cause of those events is smothered in what now appear to many to be the false promises of the peace process.

Another tradition is under threat in Pomeroy. Robert Rainey, the fourth generation of his family to run a butcher's shop there, is close to closing because his customers have deserted him.

Mr Rainey, a 33-year-old Protestant with a wife and two young daughters, usually sells around 150 turkeys but this year he has had barely 20 orders. He has been forced to take part-time work and his parents have come out of retirement to run the shop.

But the family know they are wasting their time waiting for old customers to come

back. They have not been back since July, when the Raineys became victims of a nationalist boycott of Protestant businesses which began after the violence at Drumcree, when Orangemen across Ulster rallied to Portadown to resist their march: being removed away from its traditional route through a Catholic estate.

Mr Rainey can find no comfort in the knowledge that he is not alone, saying: "Lisabaska, Castledillon, Bellaghy and Castlederg, they've all been hit."

"It's been very well organised by Sinn Féin/IRA," he claims. "I've customers who've told me that they have been threatened with getting

News in brief

Customs stoppage today at Gatwick

CUSTOMS officers at Gatwick airport are holding a 24-hour strike today. More than 80 officers staffing the green "nothing to declare" Customs channels were due to begin their action at midnight.

They are in dispute over the introduction of new working practices. Today's action follows a one-hour stoppage last week and will be followed by a 48-hour stoppage in the new year. The red channel is not affected.

A spokeswoman for Gatwick airport said she expected the strike to have no impact on Christmas travellers.

Nurses held in Saudi jail

TWO British nurses are preparing to spend Christmas in a Saudi Arabian jail after Foreign Office pressure yesterday failed to secure their release. The women, in their 50s, have been held in a prison in Dhahran since Friday. They are being questioned about the murder of Yvonne Gillford, an Australian senior nurse aged 55, who worked with them at the King Fahd military hospital.

Some 40 British staff at the hospital have been told they cannot leave the country.

Pay rise for authors

AUTHORS are to get a 35 per cent pay rise from public libraries. Public Lending Right rates will increase from 2p per book borrowed to 2.7p from January 13 for writers in the scheme.

Most borrowed authors — such as Catherine Cookson, Dick Francis and Ruth Rendell, whose books are all loaned out at least a million times a year — will be unaffected by the changes as the maximum payment per writer remains at 55,000.

Shake-up at Radio 1

RADIO 1 is changing its daytime presenters. Mark Goodier loses the weekday drivetime show to Mark Radcliffe and Marc Riley, who currently present the 10pm-midnight slot. Goodier will move to Saturday mornings to "strengthen the weekends".

Lisa L'Anson, who begins maternity leave this week, is to be replaced at lunchtime by Jo Whalley, who currently presents a mid-evening show. — *Andrew Culf*

D Shamoon and H Alwan

A REPORT of the trial of tax inspector Michael Alcock, based on a Press Association copy, published on November 7, suggested inaccurately that co-defendants David Shamoon and Hisham Alwan faced 17 counts of corruption including charges of offering bribes of up to £150,000 and holidays to Mr Alcock in return for favourable treatment of their tax affairs.

In fact, Mr Alwan faces three counts of corruption, which relate to the provision of the services of a prostitute, and Mr Shamoon faced one count which related to the provision of one holiday, of which he has since been acquitted. The Guardian regrets the error and is happy to set the record straight.



Cara Weatherstone... stepped on copper pipe to flick switch

Girl electrocuted as she switches on tree lights

SAFETY warnings were issued yesterday after a girl aged six was killed in front of her family as she switched on the fairy lights of a Christmas tree.

Cara Weatherstone, described as a bright and brilliant little girl, died instantly at her home in Horseshoe, Yorkshire, after stepping on a copper pipe to flick the switch on a table-lamp connected to the lights, bought four years ago.

Her six brothers and sisters watched in horror, and Fiona, aged 14, suffered a minor shock as she tried to push Cara free. Yorkshire Electricity and trading standards officers are examining the lights and fittings.

Cara's grandfather, George Weatherstone, 67, said that all the children were sensible and had been warned about switching on the lights with dangerous things. Cara had turned the lights on frequently before, but on this occasion her foot had been on the pipe, earthing the charge

and giving her no chance. "It's such a tragedy — poor little Cara, it's just not fair. I wish it had been me. She was a bright, wonderful, brilliant little girl who was very well-behaved, just like her brothers and sisters."

Police in Horseshoe said that the children's mother, Beverly, 38, was on the phone outside the room when the incident happened at Pioneer Terrace, close to the resort's seafront.

Cara and the other children were with their father, Anthony, 40, who works for East Riding of Yorkshire social services at a remand centre. Schoolfriends and relatives paid tribute to Cara, who was pronounced dead at Hull Royal Infirmary where a post-mortem will be held.

The headmaster of Horseshoe infants school, Derek Nightingale, said: "She was a beautiful little girl, smiling, happy, cheerful and hard-working — a really delightful child. We had just said goodbye to them, all those happy faces going home for Christmas, and then something like this happens." Cara's parents were said to be devastated.

In a statement issued on their behalf they appealed to be left alone to try to provide a Christmas for their other children: Fiona, Nicky, 15, Aaron, 12, Maxine, 10, Yvonne, five, and Marcus, 18 months.

The family will be seen in due course by police. Inspector Dennis Cheater said: "The children have got to be interviewed but they're going to be very difficult to do because of their ages and because they are all devastated."

"The house wiring and the lamp that the lights were plugged into are all going to be examined by Yorkshire Electricity and trading standards officers and hopefully that will give us a better idea of what happened."

Police and Yorkshire Electricity issued warnings about precautions with fairy lights.

Mr Cheater said: "The obvious warning is 'be very careful when handling wiring on Christmas lights because you're dealing with electricity and it can kill. If you're not sure, consult an electrician.'"

Extremely cold comfort for the Buddhist who went up a hill and caused a mountain of trouble

David Ward

THERE are few mountains in Milton Keynes. So a local Buddhist, keen to meditate in elevated isolation, packed his thermals, sleeping bag and tent and headed for North Wales.

At much the same time, members of the South Snowdonia Search and Rescue Team were making final arrangements for

their Christmas bash at Beggelert, a village in the shadow of Snowdon.

The Buddhist had set his sights on the middle path to the summit of Cader Idris (2,927ft). The rescue team had set their own good food and drink.

On the way up his chosen mountain, the Buddhist met some walkers who, noting what appeared to be a serious gash on his face, became concerned for his

safety. They called the police who summoned the rescue team who dropped their forks, lowered their glasses, sighed, and headed 30 miles south.

The Buddhist settled on to his perch to sit through the night as winds gusted at -30C. The rescuers summoned a helicopter from RAF Valley on Anglesey, called out the search dogs, and pulled on their boots.

The helicopter swept over the mountain, its floodlight piercing the darkness, but found no one. It lifted two four-man teams on to the slopes and soon one team stumbled on their quarry.

"What are you doing here?" the Buddhist asked, mistified at this invasion of his privacy.

The team replied that they looked worse than he was. He'd got appropriate gear and he seemed in good

Entertainments & Travel

TOWER THEATRE
Canterbury Place, Islington, London, N1 2NQ
The Lambeth Walk Musical

ME AND MY GIRL

Books/Lyrics: I. Arthur Rose, Douglas Farber
Music: Noel Gay
Evenings 8.7.30pm/5.00pm
Dec 14 to Sat Jan 4
(except Dec 16, 18, 20)
Mets at 3pm/Sun Dec 15, Sat Dec 21, Sun Dec 29, Sat Jan 4

Box Office
0171 226 3633
2pm-5pm

Seats 57 (meats/boxes, mats £5); Seats £8/£5

Seats 57 (meats/boxes, mats £5); Seats £8/£5

ADRIAN LLOYD WISBERG
MASTERPIECE "The Journal"

SUNSET BOULEVARD
Master of 7 Years

BEST MUSICAL
24th CENTURY CARD BOARDS
CALL 0171 418 555 (day) 0171 418 555 (eve)
GROUP BOOKING 0171 418 555
(day) 0171 418 555 (eve)
Normal Information 379 898
Mastercard 379 898
Bookings 379 898
11th Dec 24 Dec 24

THEATRE LONDON

ALHAMBRA THEATRE 0171 389 1730
0171 384 4444
The Royal Shakespeare Company
The Cherry Orchard
Adapted by Anton Chekhov
Directed by Celia Catterall
Even 7.30 Weds Thu & Sat 8.00

CONYNGH THEATRE 0171 389 1730
0171 384 4444
Maggie Smith
"Brighton Beach Memoirs"
Directed by Celia Catterall
Even 7.30 Weds Thu & Sat 8.00

THE CHERRY ORCHARD
Adapted by Anton Chekhov
Directed by Celia Catterall
Even 7.30 Weds Thu & Sat 8.00

ALHAMBRA THEATRE 0171 389 1730
0171 384 4444
Diana Ross David Hovav
"The Boy Who Swam with Piranhas"
Even 7.30 Weds Thu & Sat 8.00

ALHAMBRA THEATRE 0171 389 1730
0171 384 4444
"The Boy Who Swam with Piranhas"
Even 7.30 Weds Thu & Sat 8.00

ALHAMBRA THEATRE 0171 389 1730
0171 384 4444
"The Boy Who Swam with Piranhas"
Even 7.30 Weds Thu & Sat 8.00

CONYNGH THEATRE 0171 389 1730
0171 384 4444
Maggie Smith
"Brighton Beach Memoirs"
Directed by Celia Catterall
Even 7.30 Weds Thu & Sat 8.00

THE CHERRY ORCHARD
Adapted by Anton Chekhov
Directed by Celia Catterall
Even 7.30 Weds Thu & Sat 8.00

ALHAMBRA THEATRE 0171 389 1730
0171 384 4444
Diana Ross David Hovav
"The Boy Who Swam with Piranhas"
Even 7.30 Weds Thu & Sat 8.00

ALHAMBRA THEATRE 0171 389 1730
0171 384 4444
"The Boy Who Swam with Piranhas"
Even 7.30 Weds Thu & Sat 8.00

ALHAMBRA THEATRE 0171 389 1730
0171 384 4444
"The Boy Who Swam with Piranhas"
Even 7.30 Weds Thu & Sat 8.00

FLIGHT MARKET

CHEAP FLIGHTS ALL AREAS
Charterair, rebooked, efficient
service. 0171 4008 744

OVERSEAS

British Virgin Islands Club
Luxurious villa with pool
and secret beach
Included Caribbean drinks
For a brochure telephone:
01932 220477
http://www.bvicol.com

OPERA

ROYAL OPERA HOUSE 0171 504
400 for Box Office & Study only
Total Telephone 0171 504 4000

BALLET

COLLEGE 0171 504 4000
UNITS 4 JAN Mon to Sat 1.30 & 7.30
2.00 Dec 20m & 7pm
Sat 1.30

THE "BROADWAY"
KIROV BALLET
The Nutcracker

SADLER'S WELLS at the
PEACOCK THEATRE 0171 574
4000
City Ballet of London

CINDERELLA
Dec 22/23/24 at 2.30 & 7.30
(Dec 24/25/26 Dec 4 and 11)

To advertise
in
Entertainments
Telephone 0171 611 9100 or
0161 834 8886
Travel
on
Telephone 0171 611 9010

New in brief

Deng 'too ill' to go to Hong Kong handover

IN HIS present state of health, it would be hard for China's paramount leader Deng Xiaoping to visit Hong Kong for the colony's return to Chinese rule next July, a senior official said yesterday. "For him to go now would be quite difficult," Zhang Baifa, the vice-mayor of Beijing, said in response to reporters' questions at a reception. "When someone is more than 90 years old, it's a big thing even to get a cold." Chinese officials rarely speak so candidly about Mr Deng, who was 92 in August. The usual official response to questions about him is that he is in good health for a man of his age. Mr Zhang, a close associate of Mr Deng, said Mr Deng was in "very good" health. He said Mr Deng was in Beijing and dismissed reports that he was slowly being moved towards Hong Kong before the British colony reverts to Chinese sovereignty on July 1. Mr Deng's health is an issue of constant speculation because many Chinese fear his death might precipitate a power struggle that could derail economic reforms he set in place. Meanwhile, Hong Kong's colonial governor, Chris Patten, yesterday refused a request by the future leader Tung Chee-hwa to support the latter's candidature for the territory when the British depart. The two men held their first meeting since Mr Tung was chosen to head the legislature on December 11 by a China-controlled committee. — Agencies, Beijing and Hong Kong.

Mass killer stripped of fortune

A COURT in Australia stripped the Port Arthur mass murderer Martin Bryant of a fortune worth more than A\$1 million (\$480,000) yesterday, a month after sentencing him to life in jail. The court ordered Bryant to surrender his assets, inherited four years ago, to the Tasmanian state government for liquidation and distribution among survivors of the shooting of 35 people at a tourist spot in the island state last April. — Reuters, Hobart.

Presidents 'got off too lightly'

SOUTH KOREA'S "trial of the century" headed to the Supreme Court yesterday after prosecutors challenged sentences against former presidents Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae-woo as too lenient. The two men decided they would not seek to overturn verdicts imposed by an appeals court on charges of mutiny, treason and corruption. Last week, the appeals court commuted Chun's death sentence to life in jail and reduced Roh's prison term to 17 years from 22-and-a-half. Their convictions relate to a 1979 coup, an army massacre that crushed democratic resistance in 1980 in Kwangju and illegal slush funds they amassed, worth hundreds of millions of dollars. — Reuters, Seoul.

Dutch say no to drugs summit

THE Dutch prime minister, Wim Kok, welcomes a call by his Belgian counterpart, Jean-Luc Dehaene, for a drugs "mini-summit", but is not yet ready to commit the Netherlands to such a meeting, a spokesman said yesterday. Mr Dehaene had said he would favour a summit of France, Germany and the Benelux countries to combat the drug threat. Mr Kok's office said he welcomed Belgium's pragmatic approach to the drugs problem. "Mr Kok is not ruling out a mini-summit but he has the view that the ministers for police, justice and public health are more closely concerned with the problem and it might be better if they met first." — Reuters, Amsterdam.

Weizman apologises to gays

THE ISRAELI president, Ezer Weizman, met gay and lesbian leaders yesterday and apologised for publicly denouncing homosexuality as "abnormal". "The president says that he must express sorrow for any act or comment that causes public humiliation or can be interpreted as such," his spokesman, Arieh Shimmer, said after the meeting. "It is necessary to guard the honour, rights and welfare of all the citizens of the state of Israel." — Reuters, Jerusalem.

Algiers car bomb kills three

A CAR bomb exploded near a crowded cafe in central Algiers yesterday killing at least three people and wounding 70, up to 30 seriously, Algerian hospital sources said. Security forces, wielding assault rifles, sealed off the scene of the explosion, which wrecked a cafe, shattered windows and damaged cars. Residents believed the casualty toll could rise. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blast, but more than 1,400 civilians have died in bomb attacks by fundamentalist Muslim rebels in the past two years, according to a government human rights body. — Reuters, Paris.



A group of retired Carmelite nuns work out in an old people's home in Tortumolinos, Spain. The nuns, once missionaries, like to keep fit. PHOTOGRAPH: JESUS DOMINGUEZ

Peace accord in Tajikistan

THE warring sides in Tajikistan's four-year civil war yesterday signed two peace accords, Interfax news agency said. Signed by President Imomali Rakhmonov, the Islamist opposition leader Sayid Abdullo Nuri and a United Nations envoy, they detail powers of a national reconciliation commission, its staff, and the Russian prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, present at the signing in Moscow, said the agreements "reflect the aspirations of the whole Tajik people who are tired of war and feuds". The two sides undertake to complete negotiations for a permanent peace settlement by July 1. They are expected to declare a general amnesty and to exchange prisoners of war, Interfax said. A Tajik government spokesman, Zafar Saidov, said the commission would prepare for a constitutional referendum and parliamentary elections. — Reuters, Moscow.

Hospital fire kills nine

NINE elderly German women were killed in a fire that destroyed a dormitory in a psychiatric hospital in the small northern town of Rickling, police said yesterday. The women, aged between 65 and 85, were psychiatric patients. Police said arson could not be ruled out. — Reuters, Hamburg.

The chilling existential payoff is that no one knows George — he never existed. Yeah, sure — a soft, fluffy Christmas movie... It's A Wonderful Life?

G2 page 6

Cold welcome at the Kremlin

Yeltsin makes shaky start

David Hearst in Moscow

BORIS Yeltsin returned to his Kremlin office for the first time in six months yesterday, declaring himself fully recovered from his recent heart surgery and ready for the political battle ahead. It was a brief and utterly unconvincing performance.

His minutes kept the public at arm's length. Heavily wrapped up against the cold, the president spoke to an official camera crew as he stepped out of his car. His head was seen to shake, as it

had during his television address last Friday. The return of a sick tsar to restore order in the Kremlin was common enough in the time of Ivan the Terrible, but Mr Yeltsin's warning that he would call to account officials who had profited from his absence was less than terrifying. "The coming year will be better for Russia. That is the firm word of the president. We will make everyone make a report of what they have done, irrespective of their merits," he said.

Michael DeBakey, the American heart specialist who was present on November 5 for the quintuple bypass operation, said the president should have no difficulty working eight hours a day, but should abstain from alcohol. General Alexander Lebed, a former presidential rival, claimed last week that Mr Yeltsin was drinking heavily again. John Major, speaking by telephone, was among the first to greet him back at work. The presidential press service said Mr Major would visit Russia next year. Despite this year's spying row and the expulsion of some British diplomats, the two leaders expressed satisfaction with Anglo-Russian relations. Mr Yeltsin said

Russia was ready for "deeper co-operation in economic and commercial spheres". The president was also courted by the East. The Chinese prime minister Li Peng will visit Moscow this week to pave the way for a presidential summit. The two countries are negotiating the sale of nuclear power stations and a natural gas pipeline. Domestically, the welcome home was less warm. Mr Yeltsin was greeted with the news that five governors had been elected on Sunday from opposition ranks representing powerful areas such as Chelyabinsk and Ryazan. Alexei

Lebed, the younger brother of Alexander, won the first round run-off in Khakassia region in eastern Siberia. The Kremlin claims that numerically it is winning the fight for the gubernatorial elections, but three of the seven Yeltsin-appointed governors re-elected by the popular vote came from small, sparsely populated regions. Collectively, the governors have considerable political sway. In the absence of strong local Dumas (parliaments), they control the funds, and as members of the upper house of parliament, decide constitutional issues. The communist leader Gen-

nady Zyuganov claimed that his alliance of Communists and nationalists in the Union of National and Patriotic Forces was close to winning control of the upper house. Mr Yeltsin's return has triggered fresh rumours about changes in his administration. His daughter Tatiana Djachenko, who has been romantically linked to Anatoly Chubais, the chief of staff, is being tipped for an official job in the Kremlin. Both Yevgeny Yasin, the economics minister, and Alexander Livshits, the radical democrat finance minister, are being spoken about as potential victims of a reshuffle.



An Ostrovski hunter waits for a tow as his countrymen hope their new governor will lead them from poverty and corruption. PHOTOGRAPH: GLEB KOSOVNOV

Grumpy bear awakes to jolt complacent leaders

David Hearst reports from the freezing and lawless forests of Ostrovski on a surprising election result that will worry Moscow

IN ONLY two circumstances will the milk-nerved bear of the sleepy, frozen forests of northern Russia turn into 600lbs of fur, claw and jaw all concentrated on ripping your throat apart. Bears don't take kindly to being shot at, or worse still, being woken up. Hence the expression in Russian politics: "Don't wake the bear". Yet this is exactly what Moscow and its deeply incompetent and corrupt officials have just done. A very large and aggressive political beast, consisting of 15 different political parties from Communists to nationalists, has just sprung out of the forests to gobble up the regional governor.

Valery Arbusov, the sitting governor, had everything on his side. He was appointed by Boris Yeltsin. He had put his placemen in the local parliament. He had an iron grip on the region's budget and its television station. Yesterday he was overwhelmed by his defeat — losing by a crushing

64 per cent vote to his opponent, Viktor Sherstunov. Mr Sherstunov is not a left-wing beast. A former prosecutor, he campaigned on a law and order ticket and managed to get the endorsement of both Alexander Lebed, the nationalist former security chief, and the Communists. In Moscow, this would be impossible to achieve. If this form of compromise between moderate nationalists and Communists, between the centre and the left were forged, the ailing President Yeltsin and his elite group of bankers who advise him would be swept away.

It has not happened yet in Moscow, but it is happening in the provinces. The effect of a decade of cash-hoarded agrarian reform is not hard to find. Five years ago Nikolai Tugarin, aged 52, was one of 290 private farmers who was given 25 acres of collective farm land for free. Now he is one of six. All the rest have gone bankrupt, squeezed by plummeting state prices for their produce and soaring interest rates on their bank debts. Once productive land of the collective farm is now lying fallow or is overgrown with bushes. Ostrovski has run out of money. Mr Tugarin said: "What is the use of bringing the milk from your cows to the milk factory if they try to pay you for it in cheese? The cheese they offer you is extremely expensive, and what you cannot eat, you certainly can't sell, because no one has the money to pay for it. Ninety per cent of the money is in Moscow."

Mr Tugarin had a heart attack last year but discharged himself from the regional hospital when he did not have the money to pay for his drugs. Now he supplies the hospital with potatoes and he just about lives off that. The wood yards have closed, the three factories where they process cardboard from wood pulp have closed. That leaves the large prison at the other end of Ostrovski as the only other regional employer. The head doctor of the Central Regional Clinical Hospital, Valentine Kulikov, is an able, articulate man, easily outshining the local politicians around him. He worked in the Yemen and the Russian foreign ministry wants him to

work again in the embassy in Tunis. Instead he prefers a salary of \$130 (£74) a month and five months of Russian winter. He cares for a sickening population of 17,500 with only 14 doctors. Mr Kulikov needs an ear, nose and throat specialist, an eye specialist and about \$500,000 to finish the new wing of his hospital that was started almost 10

years ago. He said: "In this country there is no control over the executive. These people are showing the absence of control in the most cynical and bold way. They say 'We will do as we want and this goes from the top downwards.'" Once a supporter of the liberal reformer Grigori Yavlinsky, Mr Kulikov now says he will vote for Gen Lebed. The new governor, Mr Sherstunov, is cautious about his new relations with the Kremlin. "We will have a businesslike partnership," he said. "The [Kremlin's] attempt to divide Russia into 'ours' and 'theirs' won't work any more. The problem is not to serve your president but to serve Russia. The task of the president's administration is to find a compromise and not to impose its view as the only one that can be held."

Back in the forests the regional gamekeeper is preparing for a licensed hunt of an elk. Pavel Vysyelov has 150 bears and 900 elks in his "patch", an area the size of a small country — 1,300 square miles. Shooting of wild boar has been prohibited for the

past two years, but the woods once protected by the Soviet military state — Kostroma was a closed area to foreigners — is now alive with poachers. Mr Vysyelov, a sober, deliberate man said: "What do you want? The people are angry. They no longer have the means to live, so they hunt for their food. I have been shot at and had my carbine taken away from me." He and his wife live entirely off the land. "We have tired of the land. We have to, we can't afford anything else. The state still owes me the money I spent last year on the fuel for the snow machine we use to patrol the forests." Snow inches thick is now covering the farmer Tugarin's tractors as he struggles single-handedly to build a roof for the barn. It's a battle against the elements and the elements will win.

"I was at the bank the other day and the bank manager said, 'Hi, richest man in the region'. I asked him why. Because you are the only person who does not owe me any money", he replied. "This is good old-fashioned Russian chaos. But I am an optimist. I want order in my country."

France goes cold turkey on turkey

cheese or yogurt, and a desert. If we can add a little extra treat, we will," said Mr Stius, a retired businessman shouting orders to 30 volunteers in an abandoned warehouse. "So far, concerned individuals have brought in coddly toys, 24 pineapples and 6,000 avocados. We

found to get the real luxury food between Christmas and New Year when families realise they cannot eat any more of it themselves." In the three years he has been a volunteer for Resto-urants du Coeur — a charitable foundation created in 1985 by the late comedian Coluche — Mr Stius has seen a decline in the standard of food. "We used to get 30 per cent of our staple food from European Union surpluses. But now that the EU food mountain is little more than a hillock, we are hav-

ing to spend much more of the money donated by individuals on basic foodstuffs. "But it is Christmas for the poor as well, and they deserve a little extra something to cheer them up." This view has inspired 30 Paris restaurants to offer free meals to poor people accompanied by a patron paying the full price. They have asked Mr Stius's organisation to vet those claiming the free food, Mr Stius said. "When Coluche launched Resto-urants du Coeur he opened them to anyone who was hungry. Unfortunately, people who were not hungry came too. So now we limit meals and food parcels to people with less than 2,600 francs (\$205) left over a month, after rent."

For most French people, Christmas is as much of a binge as it is for Britons — only a more varied one. Turkey sales are down by 10 per cent this year. Main-course favourites tonight will be beef, chicken or salmon. For the first time, the *Bûche de Noël* faces serious competition from exotic fruit salads.

Bûche de Noël aux marrons

For eight people. 125g dark chocolate 125g unsalted butter, softened with a fork 500g chestnut purée 125g icing sugar aluminium foil Melt the chocolate over a low heat in a saucepan with 2 tbsp water. In a bowl, work through the chestnut purée until creamy. Fold in the butter and melted chocolate. Add

half the icing sugar. Mix until smooth, adding a little rum if desired. Spoon mixture on to a piece of aluminium foil, folded double. Shape into a loaf and roll in foil. Leave in fridge for 24 hours or freezer for 2 hrs. When firm, remove foil and score top with fork to imitate bark of a log. Dust with icing sugar. Decorate with artificial holly or marzipan figures. Serve with cream.

Police raid satanic sect in Belgian paedophile case

Stephen Bates in Brussels

THE Belgian police's lengthy search for evidence in the country's paedophile scandal took a shocking turn yesterday with confirmation that they had removed human skulls from the premises of satanic sects. More than 150 officers took part in the midnight raid on the headquarters of several obscure cults at Forchies-la-Marche, near the southern city of Charleroi where the paedophile investigation has centred for the past four months. The property houses organisations called the Belgian Church of Satan and the Luciferian Initiation Order. The raid followed a week of intensified public activity by the police, who have been accused of incompetence in their handling of the investigation of the disappearance of a number of children. Belgium was devastated in August when the police arrested Marc Dutroux, a builder and convicted paedophile, in Charleroi and subsequently discovered the bodies of four children buried in the gardens of properties Du-

troux owned in the area. Two of the bodies were of eight-year-old girls, missing from their homes for more than a year, who starved to death while held in a cell in the basement of one of Dutroux's homes. The parliamentary inquiry into the child abductions has exposed staggering inter-force rivalries which meant that leads pointing to Dutroux were either never passed on or not followed up. As part of their search for evidence to convict Dutroux and his associates, police have spent the past week digging through disused and gloomed mine shafts near the Charleroi suburb of Jumet, so far without finding any evidence that they ever incarcerated anyone there. The area, which is riddled with long-abandoned workings dating back up to 300 years, was first searched two months ago after Dutroux told the police that they might "find something interesting" there. It was resumed last week after Dutroux's wife, Michèle Martin — who is also in custody — told the authorities they might find bodies.

Handwritten Arabic text: "مكتبة الامم المتحدة"

Cracks appear in Pakistan corruption commission Charges against Bhutto fail to stick

Suzanne Goldenberg in Islamabad

PAKISTAN'S caretaker government has all but admitted failure in its attempt to punish members of the country's elite who have been accused of siphoning off huge sums during the government of the sacked prime minister, Benazir Bhutto.

The remaining loyalists within Ms Bhutto's divided Pakistan People's Party (PPP) accuse the caretaker administration of using corruption to try to rig the elections. "This is just one-sided. Nearly 50 days have passed and they haven't brought any charges against us. It's political victimisation," said Naheed Khan, Ms Bhutto's private secretary, who was hauled on charges of misuse of public funds after spending more than a month in jail.

However, Shafiqat Mahmood, who broke with Ms Bhutto to join the caretaker cabinet, said the whole notion of a comprehensive clean-up in such a short time span was misconceived. "I think the expectations were unfairly raised and we couldn't live up to them. The legal procedures are such that to expect anything dramatic to happen in 90 days is too much. I don't see any top-ranking politicians being eliminated before the elections."



Singobile Mabheha receives the staff of authority from Zimbabwe's minister of local government, John Nkomo, as she succeeds her father as chief of the Nswazi people (above); and young Ndebele warriors (below) dance in celebration

Speed of success leaves Taliban in confusion

Suzanne Goldenberg reports on the doubts enveloping the new rulers in Kabul, where terror is the only certainty

MOHAMMED Rasool has been consumed by war. His left shin has been replaced by a plastic shield and his withered right arm hangs useless by his side. But he is still a soldier and has a new war to fight.

By ruling through terror, the argument goes, the Taliban hope to restore cohesion to a movement which has been infiltrated, and perhaps tainted, by the fighters of conquered mujahedin groups.

mentalist or moderate. We are all the same from top to bottom." Ms Newberg believes the confusion about the Taliban's intent springs from the speed of their victory.

Representatives of international organisations in Kabul believe the absorption of fighters like Mohammed Rasool is crucial to understanding the Taliban who, three months after the capture of the Afghan capital, remain a mystery to the outside world.

to be vested in the extremely conservative town of Kandahar in southern Afghanistan, where he founded the movement in 1994.

He said decisions on the rights of women and girls would have to be deferred until fighting had ceased.

The chief who wears a miniskirt

Andrew Meldrum reports from Matandele in southern Zimbabwe where after much debate the Nswazi people have broken traditional culture and appointed a student teacher as their first female tribal leader



skirts, high heels and has a boyfriend, who is a school teacher. At weekends she goes back to her family's rural home where she meets in council with the Mabheha clan's elders.

SURROUNDED by government ministers and tribal chiefs, Singobile Mabheha appears a model of female subservience as she bows her head and modestly lowers her eyes.

Chief Howard Mabheha died in 1993 and he had no son to succeed him. It therefore fell upon his eldest daughter, Singobile, to succeed him and she has taken up his chieftainship responsibilities with humility," he said.

"I bring your community a Christmas present, your new chief Singobile Mabheha," said Zimbabwe's minister for local government, John Nkomo, to ululations and cheers.

Mabheha with the traditional chief's costume, an incongruous but arresting mix of African and colonial symbols of authority: a crimson and purple chief's robe, a white pith helmet, a leopard skin and a staff.

Her investiture, however, does not bring an end to the controversy. The ceremony was boycotted by several chiefs and political figures and the attendance of 800 was smaller than the 2,000 that had been anticipated.

Victory, before the vote

Ramathan Hussain in Singapore

THE People's Action Party (PAP), which has ruled Singapore since 1959, swept back to power yesterday before a single vote was cast.



No contest: Goh Chok Tong cruises to another term as Singapore's prime minister

then in 20, 30 years' time, the whole of Singapore will be bustling away and your estate, through your own choice, will be left behind. They're leaving us. That's my message."

Burundi rebels call ceasefire

Chris McGreal in Johannesburg

HUTU rebels in Burundi have called a Christmas ceasefire in the civil war as the Tutsi-led military government denied accusations that its army is responsible for further massacres of civilians.

Aborigines win right to claim farming land

Alan Thornhill in Canberra

ABORIGINES won an important legal victory yesterday, paving the way for "traditional ownership" claims on a possible 40 per cent of the continent.

No Christmas for jailed boys

Alan Thornhill in Canberra

TWO Aboriginal boys, jailed for spitting at the politician behind Australia's race row, were granted bail yesterday at a special children's court hearing in Brisbane, but were told they could not go home for Christmas.

We have female cabinet ministers and airplane pilots. Why not chiefs?

Chris McGreal in Johannesburg

hearings to settle family disputes and matters of property. "I want to look at all sides in any dispute and to be fair," said Ms Mabheha. "I don't want to only take the woman's side or to just take the man's side."

Aborigines win right to claim farming land

Alan Thornhill in Canberra

will see native title applications determined on almost all pastoral leases. But Aborigines rejected such claims as scaremongering.

Give peace another try
But nothing much will happen until the election

THERE are two ways of responding to the latest events in Northern Ireland. One is to shrug the shoulders and assume that the weekend's reciprocal attacks of republican on loyalist, and then of loyalist on republican, herald a long-feared downward spiral about which little can be done.

The former response is in line with the cynical and fatalistic mood of the times and typifies the tentative spirit in which the British have played their part in wasting the opportunities of the last three years.

The two weekend incidents show that the paramilitaries on both sides of the sectarian divide are well-prepared for a more general collapse into violence.

But so too did the loyalist booby trap car bomb against a top IRA man on Sunday. In the past, loyalist terrorism has tended to rely on indiscriminate assaults on soft targets.

For the moment, though, that has not happened. Serious though the situation has become, it has not yet degenerated into a free-for-all. It is in the public

interest that it does not, and there is still time to prevent it from doing so. For that to happen, however, British politicians need to recognise their own share of responsibility too.

Unfortunately there will be little or no political progress in Northern Ireland until after the British general election. This is humiliating for Northern Ireland but it is a recognition of realities. John Major is too weak to do anything that would offend the Ulster Unionists; but, as their weekend flirtation with Sir James Goldsmith shows, he is also too weak to stop them doing much that will offend him.

Northern Ireland therefore faces six months of drift. British politicians must do their bit to steady this situation. Both parties can make a contribution and should do so. The Tories must recognise that their praiseworthy efforts in Northern Ireland have not worked. But they must not now do anything that will make the job of the next government — which could after all be a Tory one — any harder.

But Labour must not hide behind the Conservatives' coat-tails either. Labour needs to know what it intends in Northern Ireland and to signal its intentions authoritatively. No change is no option. Labour needs to move the spiral in the opposite direction even before it has the chance of taking office. At a grim time in Northern Ireland politicians must keep their minds on peace-making.

Not in anyone's back yard

Howard has dropped a brick before any have been laid

EVEN before the latest fiasco, the juvenile justice system was indicted by the Audit Commission as a £1 billion failure. Less than a month ago, it called for a total restructuring of the system. Ironically, ministers have been saved from even further embarrassment by the vetoes which local communities have applied to the Government's plans for five privately-run secure training centres for persistent offenders aged 12 to 14.

The arguments against the £100 million centres were lucidly set out by a group of expert peers during the passage of the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill. Forget what the Opposition said. In a succession of arguments in the Lords, a former Conservative home secretary (Lord Carr), a former home office permanent secretary (Lord Allen), and a former social services director who took the Tory whip (Lady Faithfull) all warned minis-

ters about the "schools for criminals" which they were set on creating. They did not dispute the need for some secure places but pointed to the spare capacity in the current system. A subsequent report from the National Children's Bureau in 1995 showed that nearly one third of the children locked up in the 300 local authority-run secure places could be safely let out in the opinion of the managers. The authors were rightly disturbed by the way in which children convicted of serious offences (murder, rape and arson) were living alongside children with urgent personal problems: suicide, drug abuse and persistent absconding. Ministers were plunging ahead with the centres when much more effective and cheaper preventive programmes were still not in place in many areas: intensive supervision, juvenile bail support programmes, and special schemes for juveniles who had been cautioned. At least 1,000 such schemes could have been financed from the £30 million running costs of the five proposed centres. Far from being a Nimby veto, the community was applying a Niaby vote: Not in anyone's back yard.

Community opposition is not confined to juvenile prisons but is being applied to adult prisons too. With the prison population rising by almost 1,000 a month — the equivalent of two new prisons — the system is in crisis. Mr Howard has been forced to resort to prison ships and a former holiday camp — a fitting end to his reign.

How Santa rewards the City

The problem is how to find a good home for those bonuses

CRISIS, the charity, extended its invaluable voluntary work when it opened a national network of day centres yesterday to provide food, clothing and medical checks for up to 4,000 homeless people during the festive period. But Crisis is not the only Crisis at Christmas we should be concerned about. The other is not one of want but of excess, and it is occurring with such embarrassing regularity that something must be done about it.

There has been no sign in recent experience that any of that sort of money trickles down to the poor, whose lot has worsened, not improved, during the past 17 years. Nor is there any

evidence that the skills involved in producing such bonanzas for the City (buying and selling bonds and shares — often for our own pension funds — or investment banking) bear any relation to the huge salaries earned, let alone the grotesque bonuses that a twisted Father Christmas will put in their stockings this year. At the very least, there is something wrong with the workings of the market in the City because there are thousands of amply-skilled people who would do these jobs for hugely less than the present incumbents — without any effect on quality. Unless the City can cure this quasi-monopolistic problem itself, a special tax or "charge" (so-called so it needn't count against the sacrosanct fiscal promises of the Labour and Tory manifestos) should be imposed: with the proceeds earmarked to help the homeless. How many gold diggers in the City would have the nerve to object?



Letters to the Editor

Postman leaves his stamp

NEIL Postman gives parents and teachers no new pointers to help them offer their children a viable alternative to the consumer society (School's out forever, December 21). Today's young, faced with a daily onslaught of media advertising and peer pressure avidly calling on them to own and experience without limit, are unlikely to be impressed by quotations from Donne and Nietzsche entreating them to consider life's meaning and the wider social consequences of their actions.

I AGREE with Neil Postman that we need a reason for schooling and that there is too much emphasis on teaching the young "how to make a living" and not on "how to make a life". But there is hope. As a school governor in West Sussex, I am impressed by the determination of my teaching and other colleagues to educate each student to achieve personal fulfilment — economic, social and cultural — at school and beyond, through lifelong learning. This applies to poor as well as to rich "engineers" (Prof Postman's word). How do you

strike the right balance between our different aims and how do you weave them into the curriculum? We try very hard indeed. George Elliott, Snob Hill, Warrham Horsham, West Sussex RH13 5SN. W R Jackson, 5 St John Street, Mansfield NG18 1QE.

As ONE of the 30 per cent of this country's growing population of athletes and agonists, reading Neil Postman was an inspiration. One small worry though is his "fallen angels". It harks back to the disturbed notion of original sin, which we could do without.

Also, despite his own emphasis on the importance of imperfection, it still implies the possibility of human beings perfecting themselves and the cosmos. The mythical inhabitants of the Garden of Eden do not reflect what we now know about ourselves and the cosmos today. Clarence M G Wilson, 28 Cranham Road, Wealdstone, Middlesex HA5 6EP.

A good woman in Hong Kong and a bad man in Peru

YOU are right to be sceptical of the "legislature" which the Chinese have just selected for Hong Kong, but the criticisms of Elsie Tu who has joined it are unwarranted (Woman with a mission for Beijing, December 23).

When I taught at a university in Hong Kong during the 1960s, she provided ordinary people in Kowloon with badly needed help in their dealings with the authorities, in her capacity as an elected urban councillor. She acted unpretentiously, not "like a goddess", as one critic states in your report. She did so with difficulty, since the colonial government had given such minimal powers to elected representatives.

Indeed, democratisation came to Hong Kong far later and more grudgingly than in most parts of the British Empire — something that we should remember when we rightly complain of China's distaste for democracy.

Elsie Tu's efforts on behalf of poor people occurred against the grain of the colonial establishment. It was a time when ordinary folk systematically avoided contact with a vastly corrupt police force. On several occasions, my students were randomly rounded up at bus-stops by police and beaten in the cells. The aim was to extract bribes from relatives and friends whom they were allowed to telephone. Some rang me and I extracted them, without payment, from custody. When I raised this with a senior British police officer and a British police officer and a British police officer, they denied such things were possible.

No one should harbour any illusions about China's beneficence. But criticisms of Elsie Tu are of a piece with self-righteous views of British rule in Hong Kong. Britain should go quietly and let this fine woman continue to do what she can for people in need. James Manor, Director, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, 29 Russell Square, London WC1B 5OS.

THERE has been substantial coverage of the siege at the Japanese ambassador's residence in Peru but few facts have emerged about the Fujimori regime (Tokyo backs hard line on Peru rebels, December 23). Peru is among the most exploited countries in Latin America. Six out of 10 people are unemployed or under-employed. Wages are at an all-time low; hunger, poverty and homelessness are endemic. Since coming to power in 1990, Alberto Fujimori has instituted a series of savage austerity measures to meet the demands of the IMF for repayment of the national debt. Subsidies were cut and prices raised; staples such as rice, sugar and petrol have risen sevenfold. Public workers have taken enormous cuts in pay and over 500,000 have lost their jobs. The corrupt Fujimori regime gets rich on cocaine, producing 60 per cent of the world's coca.

Huge protests and strikes have gripped the country, often met with brutal suppression by the Peruvian military under the guise of counter-insurgency. In a corrupt, undemocratic society, where elections are rigged, is it any wonder that progressive forces such as the MRTA meet force with force? Rather than dispatching the SAS, the British government would do better to pressure the Peruvian regime into meeting the MRTA's demands. Mark Power, 2 Springsfield Place, Foleshill, Coventry CV4 6GT.

In brief

MARTIN Short's article on Freemasonry (Unsafe secret society, December 23) failed to mention the Orange Order. They also claim to be a moral, temperate organisation yet, each summer, they egg on drunken mobs in Northern Ireland. Their "leaders" then sit in Parliament while the Prime Minister condemns the suffering caused by the actions of the society. P Casey, Dorling, Surrey RH8.

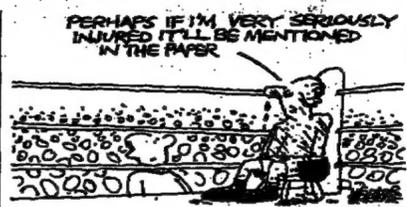
MARTIN Short should make clear why he would treat Freemasons differently from the Knights of St Columba or members of Opus Dei. Do they not also "claim to be moral societies"? E J M Turner, The Vineyards, Great Baddow, Chelmsford CM2 7QS.

I WAS dismayed to see that you had nominated Neil Jordan for the Guardian Personality of the Year, for his "services to republicanism" (December 21). Poking fun at Fergie is one thing, but trying to get a cheap laugh out of the troubles in Northern Ireland is tasteless in the extreme. Jim Killeen, 61 Albany Park, St Andrews, Fife KY16 8BP.

IF THE Duchess of York has contributed to the spread of republicanism in Britain, I thank her. She may be wrong-headed, but she is also the victim of Palace ill-will. The Queen approved her as a spouse for her son; did marriage to Andrew wholly change Sarah's character? Alan Goodman, 14 Norwood Crescent, Southport PR9 7DU.

ANDREW Moncur is wrong to mock American Christmas cards for omitting the word "Christmas" (December 18). This may be due to the large number of immigrants in America but if one wants to send greetings to non-Christians, "Season's Greetings" etc are a far better option. Strigrid Rabiger, 15 Montpelier Rise, London NW11 9SS.

IN THESE days of the international umpires' panel, surely it is wrong that one of the umpires in the first Test between England and Zimbabwe should be the administrator of the Zimbabwe Cricket Union (I will defend our tactics to the hilt, December 23)? Phil Abel, 57 Colvestons Crescent, London E8 2LJ.



If papers drop the punchline

AS the son of a boxing promoter, brought up on the fight game, I'd like to propose a campaign to ban boxing from your sports pages. In what other sport does the world champion or (rather, the world champion's manager, promoter and pay-per-view TV sponsor) select a challenger? What other sport has four "world" champions, as goodness knows how many weights, so that nobody goes title-less? What other sport

doesn't reveal who is winning until the contest is over? Isn't it time this activity was denied the legitimacy of serious sports coverage and consigned to the same life as post-Kent Walton wrestling? Derivative laughter and publicity-deprivation could prove more effective than post-fact scientific evidence and high-minded ethics. Tony Bodinatz, 11 Hermiton Avenue, London N8 8NL.

Tomorrow is another day

JONATHAN Romney's article on the centenary of the cinema (Cinema, December 21) paints a dismal picture of its future, but probably because he identifies "cinema" with "box office". They are not the same. The plethora of disaster movies is not the outcome of film-makers' concern for the future but simply because special effects are the buzzword. The "innocent eye" has not been lost; it has moved down-market. Film is now part of "visual literacy": film festivals for children's productions are sponsored by various organisations; and Channel 4's Formations

series has put the UK ahead of the world in animation. We have thousands of film-makers trying out their own ideas — it is now possible to make a feature film in your back room or over the Internet. They are not even being censored here as a lack of viewing channels, but that problem will be resolved with digital TV. The box-office cinema has run the gamut of emotions. It now has to resort to good ideas. These are not the preserve of Hollywood so looking there for inspiration will not reveal much. Sam Hayward, 25 Wain Lane, London NW2 6SH.

Europe's missing children

THE case of the twins born to a couple through donor insemination in another European Union state and subsequently disowned by their father (Legal row over disowned twins, December 20) highlights the absence of any mention of children or family policy in the European treaties, thus preventing the development of a common approach on these issues. Referral to the European Court of Justice, as is likely in this case, will be on the grounds of conflict with the right of free movement of EU citizens. This is surely a poor substitute for the development of effective policies

grounded in the welfare of children and families. This is an issue that is not going to go away. Failure to remedy the absence of any provision for addressing the European dimension of family policy will inevitably lead to an increase in referrals to European courts inside and outside the EU. (Dr) Brenwen Cohen, Director, Children in Scotland, 5 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh EH2 4RG.

We regret we cannot acknowledge receipt of letters. We may edit them: shorter ones are more likely to appear.

How the UN elects world leaders

WILBERT MUKORI (Letters, December 20) raises the important issue of the urgent need to ensure that, in future, senior UN posts are filled through a proper selection process — rather than through the disgraceful behaviour of the US Government this year and the pushing and shoving of the other members of the UN Security Council. Dr Boutros Boutros-Ghali worked tirelessly to persuade the Security Council to live up to its responsibilities in relation to Rwanda, Angola, Western Sahara, Somalia and other crisis areas in Africa and gave much support to the

West African peace initiative in Liberia. He really cannot be blamed if the results were less comprehensive than they should have been. In these crises, he was very ably supported by Kofi Annan, as head of the UN Peacekeeping Department. Although the method of selection may have left much to be desired, Kofi Annan was an excellent candidate and a fine person. He is the people's world most ably as UN Secretary-General. Malcolm Harper, Director, United Nations Association, Whitehall Court, London SW1A 2EL.

A Country Diary

CHESHIRE: The Victorian landowner of what is now the National Trust country park planted an assortment of exotic trees throughout the woodlands, the most impressive of which, for me, has to be the Giant Sequoia or Wellingtonia. It grows at the edge of the western woods and, at this time of year, when all the broad-leaved trees have lost their foliage, its rufous-red bark shines like a beacon across the pasture that separates the western and southern woods. I always stop to admire it and take the time to search for cones and fallen twigs. The cones start out green in colour, taking two years to grow into mature brown cones, which may not fall immediately and can remain on the tree for up to 20 years. On a recent visit, I picked up examples of both, together with some fallen twigs covered in scale-like leaves, which, when crushed in the hand, gave off a strong

aroma of diseased. At the top of several thin branches, male catkins were beginning to form and these would eventually turn yellow and shed pollen next spring. Its trunk was perfectly straight, leading up to a full-pointed crown of branches that swept down and then up at their ends, all supported on a swollen, slightly buttressed base. The deeply fissured bark was thick and soft to the touch, and, containing no resin, it would be quite fire-resistant. I could only guess at the age of the tree but it must have been around 100. The species was not known to western naturalists until 1852, following the gold rush in its native California, and first appeared in England in 1887, when one was planted in the Duke of Wellington's estate in Hampshire — hence its title. But the Iron Duke had died the year the tree was discovered so he never saw it. J M THOMPSON

Handwritten text in Arabic script: 'مكتبة من الامم'.

Try your hand at our Xmas quiz, page 12

Apple founder tempted to take another bite, page 12

Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

Finance Guardian

Northern bid in cliffhanger

Takeover Panel holds key to fate of electricity firm

Patrick Doonan
City Editor

NORTHERN Electric's survival was last night hanging in the balance as the Takeover Panel considered the company's appeal against the extension of a crucial bid deadline which would result in the regional

power supplier falling victim to a £750 million offer from US predator, CE Electric. Directors of the panel were deliberating their verdict late into the night as they prepared to make a statement which will decide the outcome of the closely fought bid, which is due to close at an extended deadline of 1pm today. Their decision will be based on an investigation into

whether a £250,000 payment was made to Northern's advisers, BZW, in contravention of market rules. The panel announced that the bid closing deadline had been extended from 1pm Friday until today in order to allow time for panel inquiries. A delegation from Northern and its financial advisers, BZW and Schroders, yesterday appealed for the panel to stick to the original timetable. The panel's decision is crucial for the company, as Northern had held on to its independence by the skin of its teeth by the original Friday deadline. When the votes were counted, the bidder had failed to muster a majority holding, with just 49.7 per cent of shares. But after the panel decision to extend the offer period, late

acceptances for the US bid pushed CE Electric past the winning line. If the panel rejects the Northern appeal it looks inevitable that the company will be taken over by the US bid. Northern shares were yesterday suspended at 850p because of the uncertainty surrounding the company. This compares to the bid price of 850p a share. The controversy surrounding a £250,000 performance fee related to the quality of advice given by BZW to Northern. This comes on top of a £1.5 million flat fee for handling the takeover defence. The controversy started after BZW and Schroders were quizzed by the Takeover Panel over their purchase of 2.4 per cent of Northern's shares in the market last

week. BZW assured the panel that it made the investment on its own behalf and had not been influenced by any payment from Northern. Although BZW insists that the payment conformed to all market rules and was unconnected with its decision to purchase shares in the market, the broker felt obliged to draw the panel's attention to the payment on Friday. This resulted in the bid deadline being extended pending an inquiry. A BZW spokesman last night insisted that the sum did not represent any kind of "success fee". The BZW team is led by Simon de Zoete, a direct descendant of the family who founded the broking firm. Yesterday's events promise a cliffhanger climax to one of the most dramatic bids in the

electricity sector. CE Electric has already been forced to raise its original offer from 630p and has bought a near 30 per cent stake in the market. If the company is taken over, it will become the fourth privatised regional electricity company to have been bought by a US predator. Two months ago, Virginia-based Dominion Resources agreed to pay £1.6 billion for East Midlands Electricity. Earlier this week London Electricity was the target of £1.27 billion merger plans from Entergy, a power company based in New Orleans. US companies are being drawn into the market by the commercial attractions of the electricity sector. CE Electric is the lightly regulated British electricity market, due to be thrown open to free competition from 1998.

Notebook

Bring City stars down to earth



Alex Brummer

ONE OF THE few holiday movies likely to raise a belly laugh, rather than a stomach full of sentiment, is National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation.

For those who have missed the last half-dozen showings, this slightly ham-fisted attempt by Chevy Chase, as head of the Griswold clan, to take on some of the shibboleths of the season, from the succulent turkey to the fire-side family gathering, largely revolves around the failure of an anticipated annual bonus to arrive. As our hero daydreams of his family cavorting around a new swimming pool, it becomes apparent that the bonus has been axed and the dreams and aspirations of a middle-class American family have turned to dust.

It is possible to attack such bonuses as an outdated form of paternalism. But the truth is that for certain sectors of the economy, and the City is perhaps the best example, bonuses have displaced salaries as the most important form of payment. In fact the bonuses have become so large, that some recipients use them as a means of paying off debts — an overdraft or mortgage — and downshifting to a lower paid, more intellectually satisfying and rewarding job.

In the City in particular, but in boardrooms generally, bonuses (like executive pay) are out of hand. They have reached levels which bear no relationship to the value of the services performed to the economy and which set a dangerous example — in what is an inflation-prone economy — to the larger number of employees seeking higher pay settlements, to press for them irrespective of productivity.

The examples of bonus excess have proliferated as 1996 has drawn to a close. One has to reach back to the late 1980s to find a time when so much cash has flowed from the big City firms into the pockets of their employees. The Sunday Telegraph reported last week-end that about 1,600 City brokers and bankers will receive £500,000 or more in bonuses in the next few weeks, and one of the most profitable years in the history of the financial community.

It can be argued that such bonuses are essential if the UK is to maintain its edge as Europe's, if not the world's, most important financial centre, and certainly a star City dealer is not necessarily any less deserving of a bonus than Alan Shearer or the Spice Girls.

BUT THERE are greater dangers involved. One of the key reasons that senior management at Barclays, prior to the February 1992 collapse, were unwilling to question the income flows from the Far East brought by Nick Leeson's apparently

successful trades was that it might have affected their bonus. Similarly, the big scandal of 1996, Peter Young's diversion into a fantasy world of investment of the funds he managed at Morgan Grenfell, might have been less attractive if his seniors at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, most of whom have subsequently been sacked, had not been so well incentivised. The Bank of England is among the regulators that have been deeply wary of remuneration schemes that rely too much on incentives and bonuses.

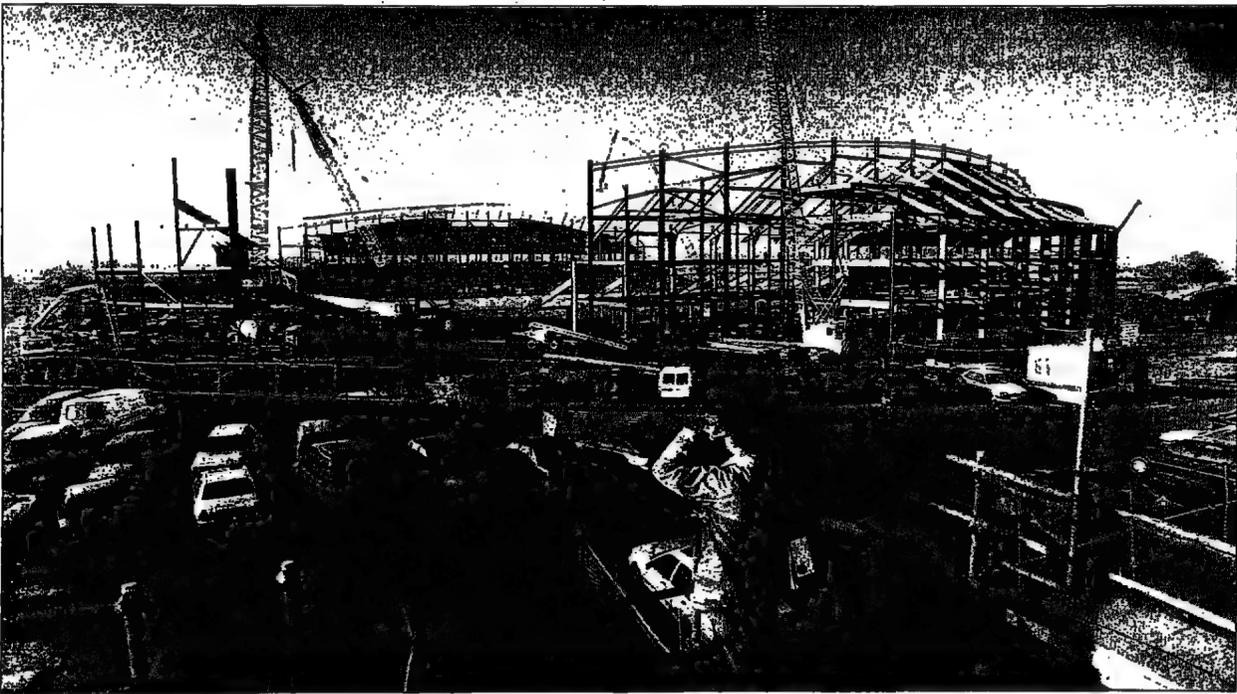
THERE IS nothing inherently wrong, however, in people garnering rich rewards for adding to the national wealth. At the tax system to do with excess, herein lies an opportunity for Labour which rightly won public support for its campaign against excess in the public utilities — which in turn resulted in the Greenbury committee and the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke's efforts to tax share options.

Mr Clarke was on the right lines with the share options tax and has reinforced his credentials as a reforming chancellor with his swipe at profit-related pay in his November budget. This, however, is a soft-shoe shuffle. Plainly, it is understandable that Labour wants to avoid all costs being viewed as a high-taxation party, hence the internal debate over the 50 per cent tax band for those earning more than £100,000. There are a number of risks in such a tax. It might alienate the Labour leader's hard won support in the Murdoch press; it could potentially provide an easy target for the Tories in their effort to portray Labour as the tax-and-spend party and it might, at the margins, be seen as anti-business.

The advantages of such a tax are that it would underpin Mr Blair's Christian Socialist credentials in a clear and understandable way and could have the support among traditional Labour supporters. But as Mr Blair and his shadow chancellor, Gordon Brown, are aware, there are many different ways of penalising those on very comfortable, even excessive, incomes in the name of fairness.

This could be done by watering down the tax reliefs available on pension contributions and the funds into which they are paid; the rules governing capital gains (especially on share bonuses or sales) could be tightened; roll-over relief — an instrument widely used for small businesses selling out — could be removed. Restoring fairness to the taxation system is a laudable goal.

THE REAL PICTURE/Bolton Wanderers' winning combination could revitalise part of North-west badly hit by job losses. Photograph: Don McPhee/Words: Martyn Halsall



FOOTBALL fans are flocking to an empty pitch eight months before kick-off as the new Bolton Wanderers stadium, part of the £150 million Middlebrook development, takes shape. It is symbolic of a new generation of service-sector jobs coming to the North-

west of England and provides some compensation for the closure of the railway works, which once dominated the nearby town of Horwich, and large local British Aerospace redundancies. About 2,500 workers will be employed during the 18-month construction period

and more than 3,000 permanent jobs are forecast on the 195-acre development, which will also include a 10-acre business park, 250,000 sq ft of offices, six restaurants, a retail park, a 120-bedroom hotel and a new railway station. Agreement for the green-field scheme north of

Bolton has made local traders fear lost business and jobs, but the 1,000-strong Bolton and Bury Chamber of Commerce has supported Middlebrook "on balance". Bolton council is one of the three partners in the scheme, agreed after a public inquiry. The out-of-town shopping

and leisure complex includes Asda, a multi-screen Warner Bros cinema and McDonald's. The site, alongside the M61, will accommodate 5,000 cars. The 25,000 all-seater stadium will provide a new home for Wanderers after a century in the town's Nigel Bell, Wanderers'

marketing manager, said: "Interest in the stadium from supporters and the business community has been tremendous." Naming rights to the stadium are open to offers. Wanderers hope to celebrate next year's opening with a return to the Premiership.

Mobil swap eases BG's burden

Simon Beavis
Industrial Editor

BITISH Gas claimed last night to have unscrambled nearly a fifth of its long-term gas contracts when it announced agreed terms with Mobil to swap North Sea assets for more competitive supply terms. The deal is the second within a month and follows an earlier breakthrough with British Petroleum. Both are said to account for 10 per cent each of a backlog of long-term, take-or-pay contracts, which British Gas has said are worth about £3.5 billion.

To clinch a deal with Mobil, British Gas is handing over a 5 per cent interest in the Beryl gas field, a near 30 per cent stake in a block in the Nevis field and 2.5 per cent in the Scottish Area Gas Evacuation system. The asset swap is a benchmark for later deals with companies like Shell which are likely to see British Gas trading slugs of its prize UK asset, the Morecambe Bay gas field. British Gas was saddled with commitments to take huge amounts of gas on long-term deals before it lost its monopoly over the gas market. With that grip now loosened and gas prices having fallen sharply, the company

has been left with pricey gas it cannot sell. Like BP, Mobil has agreed to cut the amount of gas being taken by British Gas and the selling price. But the companies refused to put a precise value on the latest deal. The deal is crucial to the survival of Centrica, the newly formed British Gas supply subsidiary which is to be demerged from BG's other main business, the TransCo pipelines business, in February. Centrica will reduce its commitment to buy gas from Mobil by cancelling two contracts and will see volumes and prices reduced on the remainder.

The assets being taken over by Mobil will boost the oil company's North Sea presence considerably. The company's reserves will rise by an extra 27 million barrels of oil equivalent (boe), and daily production will increase by 9,000 boe. Commenting on the agreement, news of which was clipped out yesterday just before the market closed, Roy Gardner, chief executive designate of Centrica, said: "This agreement with Mobil represents another important success in the renegotiation of our North Sea gas purchase contracts. I am delighted that our overall take-or-pay problem is significantly reduced."

Finance chief Grant leaves LucasVariety

Pauline Springett

THE revamp of Anglo-American engineering group LucasVariety claimed its first high profile victory yesterday with the surprise resignation of finance director John Grant. Mr Grant is being replaced by Neil Arnold, who was Variety's chief financial officer for six years before the £3.2 billion merger of Lucas and Variety earlier this year. Mr Grant was on a two-year rolling contract and last year received a total package of salary, bonus and pension contributions of £288,000. He is understood to be in line for a pay-off of £976,000. He also has options over 840,000 ordinary shares at 85p each. LucasVariety's shares closed down 6p at 226.5p yesterday. If Mr Grant sold them at that price, he would make a profit of around £1.1 million. His resignation is likely to be taken by the City as evidence that the former Variety directors may be taking precedence over the ex-Lucas board — despite the fact that the initial merger saw eight of the 14-strong management team drawn from Lucas. The chief executive of the com-

bined group, Victor Rice, was formerly head of Variety. A company spokesman yesterday vehemently denied that Mr Grant had rowed with Mr Rice. "Mr Arnold was felt by the board to have more global experience," he said. Like his predecessor, Mr Arnold is 49 years old and British. Sir Brian Pearce, chairman of LucasVariety, conceded that Mr Grant had been "disappointed" that he was not being retained. "John had designs on becoming a chief executive officer at some stage in his career," he said. The group is embarking on a sweeping £250 million restructuring which will result in the loss of 3,000 jobs and the sale of 13 businesses. The revamp is aimed at saving £130 million a year from January 1999. The disposals cover sales of £270 million and represent 6 per cent of the group. Among the casualties will be one third of the group's managers. Last month the company warned the City that it faced a downturn in demand for diesel components and braking equipment. A group spokesman said he was not prepared to disclose Mr Arnold's remuneration package at this stage.

Chancellor faces new rate row

Sarah Ryle

CHANCELLOR Kenneth Clarke will come under pressure from the Bank of England to raise base rates again early in the new year, the minutes of his October meeting with the governor, Eddie George, suggested yesterday. This could cause a new row between the pair as Mr Clarke's Tory colleagues are expected to urge him not to tighten monetary policy again for fear of damaging the electorate's sense of economic well-being before the general election. City analysts also said that the minutes lessened the

chances of a rate rise after the January 15 meeting. Although the Chancellor granted the Bank's demands for a rise in rates to 6 per cent in October, the minutes of the monthly monetary meeting showed he tried to dampen down Mr George's concern that an increase might not be enough. The governor said there had been a "textbook, domestically-driven upswing in the economy" and recommended an urgent 25 basis-points rise (0.25 percentage points). He said this "might well not be enough to moderate the upswing sufficiently to restore a better-than-even chance of achieving the inflation target over the next two years". He was concerned about the September rise in underlying inflation to 2.9 per cent and warned about price rises in the service sector, parts of the retail sector and falling unemployment. Mr Clarke focused on non-retail price inflation factors such as benign producer price inflation in a still unsteady manufacturing sector. Mr George's call for instant tightening, which he said was essential to reduce the need for a bigger rise in base rates at a later date, was countered by the Chancellor who argued that there were no immediate inflationary pressures. The minutes showed that he acted on the Bank's recommendation after seeing the 0.8

per cent flash estimate of economic growth in the three months to September. But he noted that the acceleration in activity was not starting. He added that although he expected retailers to have a good Christmas, there was no sign of an excessive consumer boom. Simon Briscoe, of Nikko bank, said: "Crucially, the Chancellor spoke about seeing no case for a rise of more than 25 basis points. Since October, the Budget has turned out to be tougher than the market and [we imagine] the governor expected. The Chancellor will say that this buys time to see the GDP figures for the fourth quarter and the next Bank inflation report."

McDonald's wises up to the poor taste of wilted lettuce

Mark Tron in New York

MCDONALD'S may be conquering the world with its Big Macs but it is having problems selling them back home. The fast-food corporation with a presence in 101 countries is being forced to change its recipe after its own research showed people preferring burgers at the rival Wendy's and Burger King. McDonald's, admitting that it overcooks some burgers, is planning to add salt and pepper to the ingredients, rather than relying on tomato ketchup to give them their taste. For the "Arch Deluxe", its new burger aimed at adults, McDonald's will even break with its long tradition of slapping the lettuce and tomato along with the burger into a microwave, a practice that makes Big Macs taste of warm, wilted lettuce. At

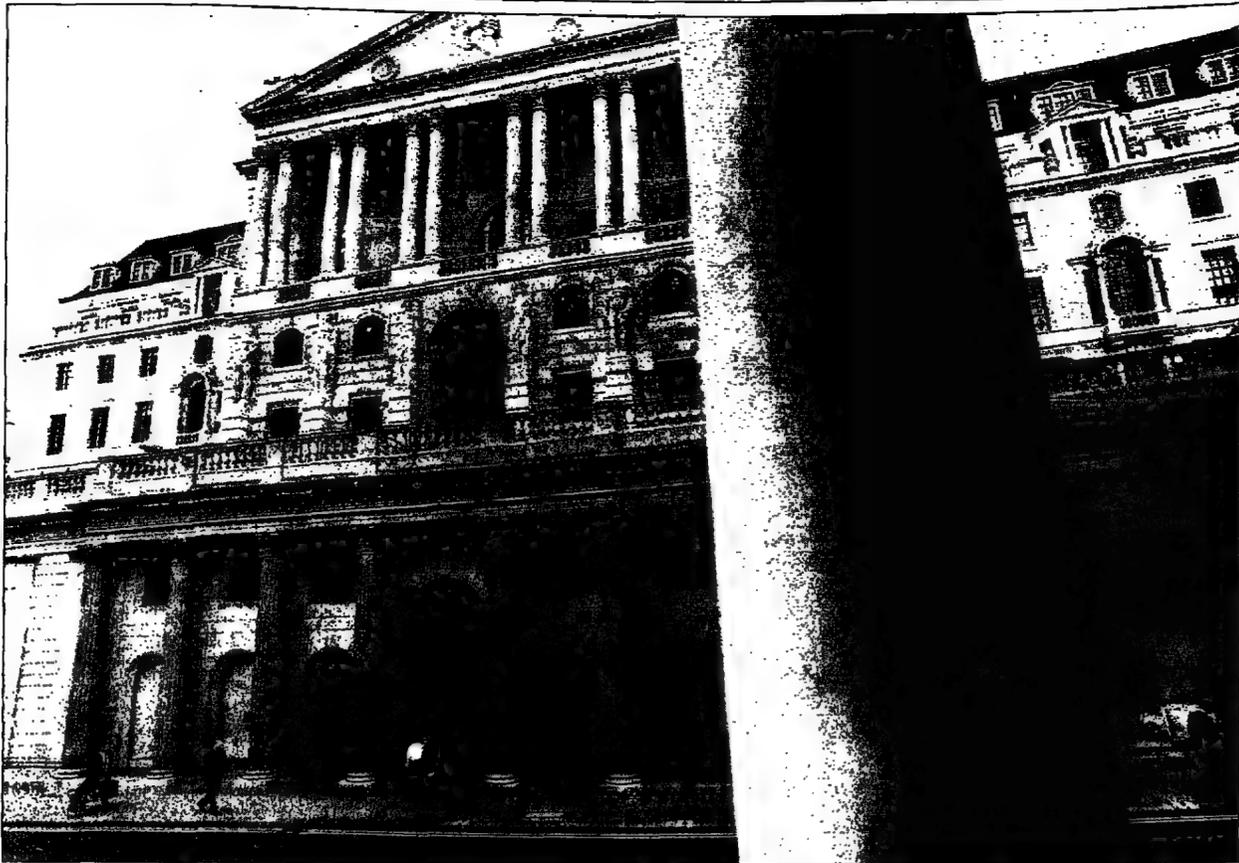
rivals, the trimmings are added by customers. These changes follow criticism from franchisees — the people who pay McDonald's for the privilege of being allowed to sell its burgers. The Deluxe line, introduced earlier this year, has drawn unflattering reviews from analysts, who called them "marginally mediocre". The company, which has 18,300 outlets worldwide, has sent a memo entitled "Maximising Taste at McDonald's" to franchisees. It contained detailed cooking instructions. The memo's author, executive vice-president Thomas Glasgow, disseminated the cooking tips after McDonald's chairman Michael Quilman spoke of solving "product taste challenges". The memo implies that the world's first name in fast food still has a few things to learn in the kitchen.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.04	France 8.50	Italy 2.504	Singapore 2.287
Austria 17.74	Germany 2.222	Malta 0.586	South Africa 7.81
Belgium 51.90	Greece 431.00	Netherlands 2.282	Spain 212.26
Canada 2.238	Hong Kong 12.82	New Zealand 2.30	Sweden 11.27
Cyprus 0.76	India 58.73	Norway 10.225	Switzerland 2.162
Denmark 8.29	Ireland 2.078	Portugal 255.20	Turkey 170.222
Finland 7.57	Israel 5.4	Saudi Arabia 8.23	USA 1.635

Supplied by Harrow Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel).

Fouls, floats, Footsie and footie. Try your hand at our Xmas quiz



Q: Who did Bank of England governor Eddy George warn off taking artificial stimulants? A: European countries making a "headlong" dash to meet the convergence criteria for monetary union. PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID GILLIOT

Put your wits against this quiz to test your knowledge of the financial news this year. Set by Ian King, Dan Atkinson and Sarah Ryle

Hatches 1. Which of the following hotel companies floated this year on the stock market: Millennium and Copthorne; Principal Hotels; Jarvis Hotels; Macdonald Hotels; Thistle Hotels?

Matches 2. Which company announced plans to more than double in size through an ambitious American acquisition, only to find shareholders less than enthusiastic? 3. Which company decided to ring the Royal? 4. Which of the following companies did the notoriously predatory UK Active

Value fund not have a stake in this year? (a) Westminster Scaffolding; (b) Greycoat; (c) Kenwood Appliances; (d) Hogg Robinson.

5. Several takeover bids were described as "the most boring in living memory". One of the most tedious involved a property company and a south London department store scrapping it out. Who were they and what happened? 6. Shortly after winning its \$3.9 billion tussle with Rocco Forte, what company did Granada launch a dawn raid on? 7. Apart from BT, which was the other Footsie company to announce a multi-billion merger with a US company? 8. Quoted restaurant groups were all the rage this year. Who tucked into My Kinda Town and Pelican Group? 9. When the crackle went out of the electricity sector, water was the next utility to excite takeover fever. Which was the first water company to get taken over, and who bought it? 10. Who got Carter? 11. Match the following bidders and targets involved in hostile bids this year: Wessex Water, Granada, Macallan-Glanlivet, BET, Southern Electric, Rentokil, Ely's of Wimbledon, ScottishPower, Lloyd's Chemists, William Cook, Forte, Gehe, Southern Water, Highland Distilleries, South West Water, TR European Growth Trust, Triplex Lloyd, Panther Securities, Unichem, Severn Trent, Elain-

wort European Privatisation Trust. 12. Before its merger with MCI, who did British Telecom originally try to make a connection with? 13. Who owns Uncle Tom Cobleigh and all?

14. Which company had the shortest stay in the Footsie 100 this year? 15. What did retiring Euro-tunnel boss Sir Alastair Morton receive as a present at his leaving bash? 16. Which high street retailer's proposed flotation was rained off for the second time in as many years? 17. One of Britain's biggest companies changed their famous name just months after triumphing in one of the year's biggest takeover bids.

Who was it, and why? 18. Which professor, while not mad, sent his employers into a rage? 19. Michael Lawrence found himself looking for a new job on January 4. What did he do and who replaced him? 20. One by one, the old corporate raiders of yesteryear fell away in 1996. Which of them decided that four into one did go, and which fell foul of Viking raiders? 21. Which was the mouse that roared at building giant Redland - but still fell into French control? 22. Which Fleet Street press baron was replaced by a socialist peer? 23. Which of the following did not go into administrative receivership? (a) Coal Investments; (b) Chamberlain Philpott; (c) SeaPerfect. 24. Apart from Lords Hanson and Stevens, which other peer stood down from heading a Footsie company this year? 25. Where wasn't Muma going any more? 26. The Rank Organisation disappeared this year. True or False? 27. Which were the two drinks companies that saw the fix disappear from their relationship?

28. Who was reinstated, after he got the chop, because shareholders wanted him back?

In the money 29. Who has been waiting nearly all year to scoop £30 million? 30. Who decided that they couldn't do without the ultimate executive toy? 31. Who was awarded £3 million in compensation by the High Court after claiming he was struggling to find work?

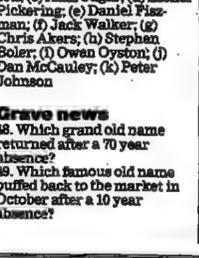
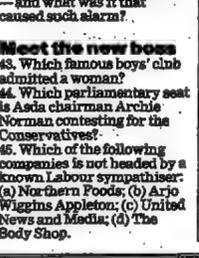
32. How many profits warnings were put out in January? (a) none; (b) five; (c) eight; (d) 12. 33. Who gave up a £200,000-a-year job to spend more time with homeless alcoholics? 34. Who said they were taking their company private, only to change their mind? 35. Who was sent reeling by alopocaps, and who sent the alopocaps spinning? 36. How many profits warn-

ings did tour operator Inspirations put out? (a) three; (b) two; (c) one; (d) none. 37. Which market saw nearly every player's profits wiped out after the year's most vicious price war, and who started it? 38. What, according to American economist Rudiger Dornbusch, is rather like finding out that your mother-in-law has a twin sister? 39. What happened to the Chancellor's Wise Men in January? Can you name three of them? 40. Which economist's imperfect grasp of information won him the Nobel Prize? 41. What, according to a book by Roger Bootle, the chief economist of City firm HSBC, died a death this year? 42. Who did not like what he saw in The Mirror last month - and what was it that caused such alarm?

43. Which famous boys' club admitted a woman? 44. Which parliamentary seat is Aiden chairman Archie Norman contesting for the Conservatives? 45. Which of the following companies is not headed by a known Labour sympathiser: (a) Northern Foods; (b) Arjo Wiggins Appleton; (c) United News and Media; (d) The Body Shop.

46. At the end of the year, who was chief executive of Loughor? (a) Tiny Rowland; (b) Nick Maxwell; (c) Dieter Beck; (d) Mohammed Al-Fayed. 47. Name the football clubs associated with these millionaire businessmen: (a) Sir

Jack Hayward; (b) Steve Gibson; (c) Alan Sugar; (d) Lionel Pickering; (e) Daniel Flesman; (f) Jack Walker; (g) Chris Akers; (h) Stephen Bolser; (i) Owen Oyston; (j) Dan McCauley; (k) Peter Johnson. 48. Which grand old name returned after a 70 year absence? 49. Which famous old name puffed back to the market in October after a 10 year absence?



ZENITH advertisement featuring a large image of a Zenith watch and the slogan 'LIFE IS IN THE MOVEMENT'. Text includes 'ZENITH TIME CO. (GB) LTD. TEL 0181 851 4391 FAX 0181 892 9256'.

Apple founder tempted back to take second bite



Steve Jobs's return casts him as struggling computer company's Buzz Lightyear. Nicholas Bannister reports

FEW OUSTED chairmen get the chance of a second bite of the same apple. But Steve Jobs, the co-founder of Apple Computer who left the group after a boardroom patch in 1985, is the exception. Mr Jobs is to get a second chance to restore Apple's fortunes after its \$240 million (£240 million) takeover of its NeXT software company. He will report to the current chairman, Gilbert Amelio, and is expected to breathe new life into the group's software business. Mr Amelio made no bones about the magic he expects from Mr Jobs. Apple, he said, was welcoming back "its most talented visionary". "Steve Jobs is someone who can inspire a new generation of customers and software developers and show that Apple remains the industry home for innovation and excitement." Mr Jobs, who claimed that much of the industry had been living off the

group's Macintosh computer for the past 10 years, forecast another breakthrough through which would leapfrog existing platforms and "fuel Apple and the industry copycats for the next 10 years and beyond". Striking stuff, but Apple needs more than inspiration to survive. No one has challenged his record for innovation, but commercial success has been elusive and Mr Jobs first parted company with Apple because for all its wizardry it was being swamped by the Intel combination - IBM-compatible personal computers using Microsoft Windows and Intel microprocessors. Since leaving Apple, Mr Jobs has had successes and failures. He co-founded NeXT and owns half of the company. However, the cube-like computer it designed and manufactured attracted little more than critical praise. Manufacturing was

halted after about 50,000 were sold in 4 1/2 years. The software developed for it looked more promising. Apple is looking for a new operating system for its own computers after its own costly attempt to develop one was abandoned when it ran into a sea of problems. But NeXT's software skills were not Apple's first choice. It wanted to take over another software company called Be, but failed after the two sides were unable to agree terms. Mr Jobs's other company, Pixar Animation Studios, made Toy Story, the all computer-animated film which became a box-office hit and turned its star, Buzz Lightyear, into the most sought-after toy this Christmas. Mr Jobs has now been cast as the Buzz Lightyear of Apple, the superhero who comes good in the end. Apple fans will welcome his return. But real life might prove tougher than the film fantasy.

Answers to business quiz

1. They all came from the same source. 2. Peter Dinklage, who died in 1995. 3. The first was in 1995. 4. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 5. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 6. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 7. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 8. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 9. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 10. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 11. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 12. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 13. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 14. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 15. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 16. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 17. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 18. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 19. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 20. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 21. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 22. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 23. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 24. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 25. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 26. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 27. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 28. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 29. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 30. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 31. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 32. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 33. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 34. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 35. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 36. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 37. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 38. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 39. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 40. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 41. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 42. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 43. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 44. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 45. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 46. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 47. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 48. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 49. In 1995, the first was in 1995. 50. In 1995, the first was in 1995.

Vertical text on the right edge of the page, including 'Count join t Notti dole', 'Dalglis into go', 'American Football Upstarts delh', and 'Team ta'.

Handwritten text at the bottom center: 'مكتبة من الامم'.

RACING: 11 CARDS FOR BOXING DAY

Chris Hawkins gives a confident vote to last season's winning team in the King George VI Chase

Dunwoody is the man for the job

THE King George VI Chase, now sponsored by Pertemps, has a habit of throwing up multiple winners and One Man will join excited company if he is victorious for the second year running on Boxing Day.

Four of the six on this list went on to win the Cheltenham Gold Cup - Pendil and Wayward Lad being the two that missed out.

Like this pair, One Man has so far looked much better over three miles on a flat circuit than over three and a quarter around Cheltenham's undulations, and it would be no surprise if chasing's ultimate prize eluded him.

That is beside the point at the moment, however, and with doubts about several of his opponents on Thursday he has an obvious chance of landing a second King George.

His virtues have long been extolled but it is to remind those who may not be familiar with the top class chasing scene, this is a spring-heeled, fast-jumping grey in the Desert Orchid mould.

Kempton suited Desert Orchid down to the ground and he won four King George's two of them with Richard Dunwoody in the saddle.

Dunwoody, of course, partnered One Man last year, when the race was run at Sandown, and stands on the threshold of four victories which would elevate him above Fred Winter and Tommy Carmody, the only other riders with three wins to their credit.

It is widely assumed that One Man is suited by courses such as Kempton, although on his only previous run here two seasons ago he fell at the 12th in the Racing Post Chase.

That is the only time he has hit the deck in his 14-race chasing career, although he once unsuited Tony Dobbin at Wetherby.

With Dunwoody, the supreme artist, in the saddle the pairing are as near to poetry in motion as one can get in



Leading duo... Richard Dunwoody and One Man will be odds-on to follow up last season's victory in the King George VI Chase

this rough and tumble game: he would be ironic and very sad if he failed to get round.

Assuming they stand up what is to be expected? Rough Quest is certainly the best of the challengers but Terry Casey has voiced worries about the ground for last season's Grand National winner.

Taking last term's Cheltenham Gold Cup form literally, he has an excellent chance.

Rough Quest finished runner-up to Imperial Call, beaten four lengths, with One Man trailing in a leg-weary sixth.

Undoubtedly Rough Quest, who will be 11 at the turn of the year, has improved both physically and mentally with age.

There was once a school of thought that he was a bit "hoggy" and not keen on a struggle but, ridden for a late burst as he was by Mick Fitzgerald in the National, he can unleash a telling turn of speed.

Indeed if he comes to the last within a length of One Man we could be in for an apple and cheese having backed the favourite at a skinny

price will be staking. The tactics on One Man will surely be to try and draw Rough Quest's sting and get him "at it" some way from home.

Strong Promise is a fascinating runner. He is only a five-year-old and only one horse of that age, Manicou in 1990, has won the race.

It is lacking a great deal of class ratings is around three stones inferior to One Man, to be on top class opponents at levels at this stage of his career but one thing in his favour is his liking for fast ground.

If Rough Quest runs he may well be regarded as the value, but I expect to see One Man's name added to that roll of honour.

See More looks the business in Feltham Chase

SEE MORE BUSINESS looks best of the rest on a Kempton card that may be short on numbers but not on quality, writes Chris Hawkins.

Paul Nicholls, the trainer, thinks the world of this young horse who goes for the Feltham Novices' Chase in Ireland where he went down by a length to Dorcas Pride who is unbeaten over fences.

They are talking about going for the Cheltenham Gold Cup with the winner so General Business (1.10) must be pretty smart, although he will have to be to beat Aardwolf who jumped well when beating Major Summit at Sandown.

Only four go to post for the Wayward Lad Novices' Chase but all are prolific winners. Potter's Bay is the likely favourite but I just prefer Mister Drum (2.45) who loves a right-handed track and has been winning with something in hand.

At Wetherby, the big race is the Rowland Meyrick Chase in which Jodami shoulders top weight. It will be a fine performance if he can see off some aspiring youngsters on these terms and The Grey Monk (2.25), in receipt of 16lb, looks the one to beat him again.

The two met at Ayr last month with The Grey Monk, eased down, coming out on top by five lengths but Jodami has a 6lb pull but that may not be enough.

The Grey Monk has since found Coome Hill too good for him over a longer trip in the Hennessy at Newbury but that may not turn out to be a bad effort.

Call it A Day is also on the upgrade but this three miles and a furlong may stretch his stamina. David Nicholson trains Call it A Day and also sends General Pershing and The Captain's Wish on the long haul from his Cotswold base.

General Pershing, who loves the mud, has been off the course for a long time, having previously been trained by Gordon Richards, and has at least one tough opponent in the Inform Super Sucker (2.45) in the Supermaster Chase.

There is a saying that one should never back the top weight in a handicap hurdle but I am flying in the face of that perceived wisdom in selecting The Captain's Wish (2.45) in the Day Hurdle. He deserves to get his head in front and made the hat-trick seeking Be Frank pull out all the stops at Warwick.

All-weather win forecast for well-weighted Cavina

Don Gas

WHILE threat of frost hangs in the air, Boxing Day's turf meetings, although so far only two inspections are planned, are at least tomorrow and Huntingdon at 7.30am on Thursday.

If the worst comes to the worst, punters will be hoping all-weather racing lives up to its name.

Lingfield have managed to stage an extra Boxing Day meeting at short notice, and yesterday the British Horseracing Board sanctioned additional fixtures for Southwell and Wolverhampton on Friday and Saturday, respectively.

Lingfield's card has held up pretty well in the circumstances and there looks to be a shape of Cavina (3.20) in the two-mile Reindeer Handicap.

Neil Graham's mare has been struggling from a high handicap mark over hurdles recently, but she looks well enough treated on the form she showed to win by four lengths over the Lingfield course and distance last year.

Worthambles won well here last time, but it is far from certain he will be in the mood to perform like that again.

Passage Creeping (2.20) and Cedex Le Passage (1.50) will be at short odds, but should be hard to beat.

Kempton card with guide to the form

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Wincanton

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Lingfield AW Flat

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Table with 2 columns: Race number and time, and Race details including horse names, jockeys, and trainers.

Results

Large table containing race results for various tracks, including horse names, jockeys, and finishing positions.

Ski Hotline advertisement featuring a list of ski resorts, contact information, and a logo for The Guardian Interactive.

Handwritten text in Arabic script: "مكتبة من الاجل"

Nottingham loses another manager, page 13
Boxing Day racing details, pages 14 and 15

Bowling along with Botham, page 13
One Man looks for his double, page 14

SportsGuardian

Premiership: Newcastle United 1, Liverpool 1

Fowler widens the gap



Confused by Collymore... Liverpool's striker goes one way and Newcastle's Beardley the other at St James' Park last night

PHOTOGRAPH: MICHAEL STEELE

Shearer strikes but Reds go three points clear

David Lacey

ALAN SHEARER, with his 13th goal of the season, and Robbie Fowler, with his 19th, responded to their cues at St James' Park last night as Newcastle United and Liverpool shared an absorbing match rich in attacking football.

Quality. A failure to win, let alone a defeat, would suggest a premature end to another title challenge was not far off. Memories of the seven-goal extravaganza at Anfield in April, won 4-3 by Liverpool after Newcastle's defence had failed to match the excellence of their attack, remained strong. That result had signalled the finish of last season's title hopes at St James' Park; now even a dull 1-0 home win would at least keep them alive.

Within five seconds, however, the size of Newcastle's task had become ominously apparent. Straight from the kick-off Collymore ran at the defence and sent in Fowler for a chance which ended with Peacock hooking the ball out from under the bar. Fowler had been given outside but that hardly diminished the significance of the moment for Newcastle's defenders.

St James' Park should have celebrated in the 10th minute. Slack Liverpool covering left Ferdinand unmarked as Gillespie, Lee and Beardley worked the ball in to him from the right. Ferdinand turned but lost his footing and did not make proper contact, unlike Raddock, who was lucky to get away with blocking a centre from Gillespie with a hand.

Newcastle's vulnerability to any sort of half-decent centre began to show itself as McAteer produced some telling crosses from the right. Albert's head intercepted one that Srnicek was never going to reach and when the goalkeeper did get to the next the weakness of his punch might have led to a crisis.

Liverpool then passed up a flurry of chances to equalise. McManaman, sent in by Bjornsbjerg, took the ball past Srnicek but shot into the side netting. Fowler, Thomas, and Fowler again were off target. Newcastle meanwhile had lost Gholia, suffering a calf injury and giving way to Clark 10 minutes before the interval. On the stroke of half-time they also lost their lead.

Ravanelli outburst adds to Boro woes

Ian Ross

FABRIZIO RAVANELLI took an unseasonal swipe at English football yesterday to ensure that Middlesbrough's season of rancour continued into the festive period.

coaching methods, in an undiplomatic outburst which will not appeal to Middlesbrough's troubled manager Bryan Robson. Speaking on an Italian TV sports programme, Ravanelli said he trained alone on Teesside using charts supplied by his previous club, Juventus.

have tons of money but they lack the organisation of Italian soccer. "The training facilities are not adequate. The stadiums are nice but the rest is just not there... there are no gyms and you don't practise very much. I am forced to train by myself using charts that the Juventus trainer faxes to me.

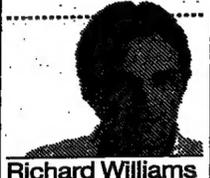
as for explosiveness and reaction time they cannot match the Italians. In soccer you have to do more than run. Middlesbrough paid £7 million for Ravanelli last summer, making him the highest-paid footballer in Britain on a reported salary of £40,000 a week. But despite recent statements to the contrary, the man they call the White Feather

— who only three months ago was being linked with Manchester United — is now clearly ill at ease with the prospect of a prolonged fight for Premiership survival.



Ravanelli... 'trains alone'

Armstrong, endurance and intimacy



Richard Williams

HAPPY Christmas to all and sundry, but particularly to Lance Armstrong, the 25-year-old American bicycle racer who was discovered three months ago to be suffering from testicular cancer and is currently recovering from chemotherapy at his home in Austin, Texas.

longest day, sharing baths and massages, or alone with their quiet despair. Fausto Coppi sits with his feet in the bidet, Louison Bobet stares into a glass of wine. Federico Bahamontes perches on his suitcase at Dunkirk station, waiting for the train home. Gino Bartali accepts a raincoat around his shoulders as he abandons the race on the freezing snow of the Col de l'Iseran.

Most of us first noticed Armstrong when he won a flat-road stage early in the 1988 Tour de France and there was a brief flash about a new American prodigy. A few days later, when the race reached the high Alps, he entered the unknown. One night in the sidestation of Serre-Chevalier, after a day of being nursed to the finish by his team-mates, he lay exhausted in his bunk and talked about giving up.

HE WAS already noted for his anti-fascist sympathies, which attracted threats against his life. And when he was found dead by the side of a road near his home one midsummer day in 1927, covered in blood after apparently falling from his machine during a training run, the rumours mounted.

But the big stage races make unique demands, and I thought of his plight on that evening in Serre-Chevalier as I looked through the pages of a new book called *An Intimate Portrait of the Tour de France* (Bouquins Publications, £29.99), a collection of remarkable black-and-white photographs, mostly drawn from the archives of L'Equipe, with a highly coloured text by Philippe Brunel.

No matter. We may never know the truth about Botticchia's death, but here is the essence of his life. In a maize field somewhere in France, he mends a puncture. He sprays his dust-covered face from a soda bottle. And he joins his fellow competitors at a feeding station, taking the shade in a sheltered alcove which, as Brunel says, could have been executed by Renoir: an image capturing sport's beauty, and its pathos.

Shearer beaten by Sammer to Europe's Golden Ball

ALAN SHEARER, so often on target for England and Newcastle, was yesterday beaten to the Golden Ball, the European Footballer of the Year award, by Matthias Sammer of Germany.

goals for Blackburn before his world record-breaking transfer to St James' Park. Sammer, the 28-year-old Borussia Dortmund sweeper, is the fifth German winner of the award — a poll of European soccer writers by France Football magazine after Gerd Müller, Franz Beckenbauer and Karl-Heinz Rummenigge (both twice) and Lothar Matthäus. "I was hoping to be in the top five but I had been injured for a while and I didn't know how the jury would react to that," he said.

Double Prize Crossword, G2 page 13

A GET TOGETHER

The MALT

مركزنا من الامم